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# BULLETIN OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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BRONSON MUSEUM

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## DISCOVERIES AT WILCOX BROOK SITE

WILLIAM S. FOWLER

After completion of the Bluff site excavation, search was made by the Narragansett Archaeological Society of Rhode Island for another site in the Flat River area of Washington, Rhode Island. About a half mile or more down stream good evidence was found of an occupied area on an elevated bank overlooking the Flat River. It seemed to be a favorable location, for here Wilcox Brook with a large flow of water empties into the river. And it was here that a start was made in the summer of 1970 to excavate. Permission was obtained from the owner, George Vardakis, to dig and remove the soil in any way that might be required, with retention of all recovered artifacts for analysis and study. Work of excavating that continued each summer without interruption until the fall of 1973 was confined to four areas, sections A through D. These were located on the river bank with elevations ranging from about 15 to 30 feet above the slow flowing river. Here it spreads into a swale, which formerly may have been an inland bay of the river. Recent extensive land development with soil removal for industrial purposes has encroached upon the site and so prevented an extensive excavation. However, in spite of this hindrance enough recoveries were made of several recognized culture occupations to provide the illustrated displays of this report, arranged in typologic order. In addition, a number of intriguing features were encountered that add significantly to the overall aspect of the evidence.

Historically, a large area, of which the excavated portion represents only the edge facing Flat River, covers a more or less flat terrain. In former years this was known as the "Great Meadow." Used principally for pasturing purposes, it doubtless was subjected to the free movement of high winds. In more recent days pine and oak forestation occurred that produced trees of considerable size. Recently these were cut down to enable soil removal operations. Doubtless repetitive changes from plain to forest, and forest to plain may have occurred over the thousands of years of man's occupation of the area. From this it might be concluded that natural forces have been at work in different ways to disturb the original deposition of artifacts in many instances. However, in some cases enough specimens of different diagnostic projectile types appeared at depths, one above another, to be useful in confirming culture sequence.

### DISTURBANCES

Site excavations revealed no evidence of previous plowing, but other disturbances caused by colonial occupancy were apparent at several places. For

instance, a refuse pit 33" in diameter yielded a gun flint, one or two glazed pottery fragments, a few brick flecks, a kaolin pipe stem, one small iron buckle, and a 1/2" length of a piece of sheet lead. A second gun flint appeared in the loam, two musket balls, and an ox shoe, besides occasional pieces of glazed pottery and glass. All of these additional recoveries, coming as they did from the loam overburden, indicate prior colonial presence of some kind. At several places large post molds appeared of a kind to suggest possible fence construction, and at one spot a large 3 or 4 foot wide hole had been dug. Apparently, this was an early disturbance hidden by years of leaf mold that yielded a glass fragment. Lying close by and extending up to the loam occurred an equally large accumulation of white sand that may have been brought up from under the subsoil when the hole was dug. To illustrate how such a disturbance could have displaced artifacts, luckily two Early Archaic points, Corner-removed#5 were uncovered nearby in the loam, far from the lower level from which this kind of point was recovered.

As previously mentioned, nature also seems to have played a significant part at the site in the disarrangement of artifacts. High winds apparently had drifted white sand over the area in early times, covering and uncovering objects of man's deposition. And then, with the coming of forests, large trees were uprooted by high winds, kicking up the subsoil along with any artifact that might have been lodged in it. And, while positive proof is lacking, it is generally believed that post-glacial frosts were extreme, causing the lifting of such light weight objects as points, scrapers and knives. With recurring frost action over the several thousand years of man's occupation, the lifting of artifacts from lower levels seems entirely possible. However, apparently such disturbing action applied only to some objects, while others seem to have been unaffected, appearing as they did at relatively low levels, even upon the underlying white sand.

Still another kind of disturbance occurred. This was as a result of animal burrowing, which appeared at times throughout the dig. Just how much all of these factors interfered with the appearance of artifacts at their original levels where dropped cannot be determined. However, some idea of their age sequence, with reference to diagnostic projectile types, may be had by noting the lowest level at which a type appeared. This approach is possible for those types that produced one or more specimens at a lower level than that of the balance, which appeared out of place at higher levels extending into the loam.



### SOIL, STRATA, AND RECOVERIES

In general, the soils encountered consisted of from 5 to 8" of loam, directly below which appeared an irregular wavy demarcation stratum of about an inch, separating loam from soils below—this is referred to as Junction. Underlying this appeared yellow subsoil of from 3 to 11" in depth. Below this occurred white sand with an undetermined depth. This had lenses of pebbles intermixed at intervals. The depths of these soils varied throughout the four sections excavated due partly to probable soil erosion in sections C and D, which occupied higher elevations on the river bank than sections A and B.

Work progressed by scraping with short handled hoes, a square at a time, completing one section before going onto the next, each laid out in 6 foot grids. A total of 12,942 square feet were excavated in this way, and 424 recordings were made of recognizable artifacts, including fractured and perfect specimens. Scattered

firestones were frequently encountered, and 11 stone hearths *in situ* were uncovered. These lay mostly at Junction or just below or above with 2 resting at maximum depths on the white sand. These two were constructed with attention paid to providing a small fire of sorts, while the others were indiscriminate assemblies of firestones. One unusual accumulation of firestones and charcoal appeared more as an underground oven of some kind, in which large cobbles apparently played an important part.

Refuse pits were comparatively few in number and usually contained no artifacts. Their contents were generally unrecognizable with an occasional animal or fish bone fragment that had withstood destruction from rot. No shellfish remains were present in any pit. However, occupants during the Ceramic-Woodland period apparently ate some shellfish, as an occasional shell fragment, or in one case a whole quahog shell, appeared in the loam. Shell remains were nonexistent in

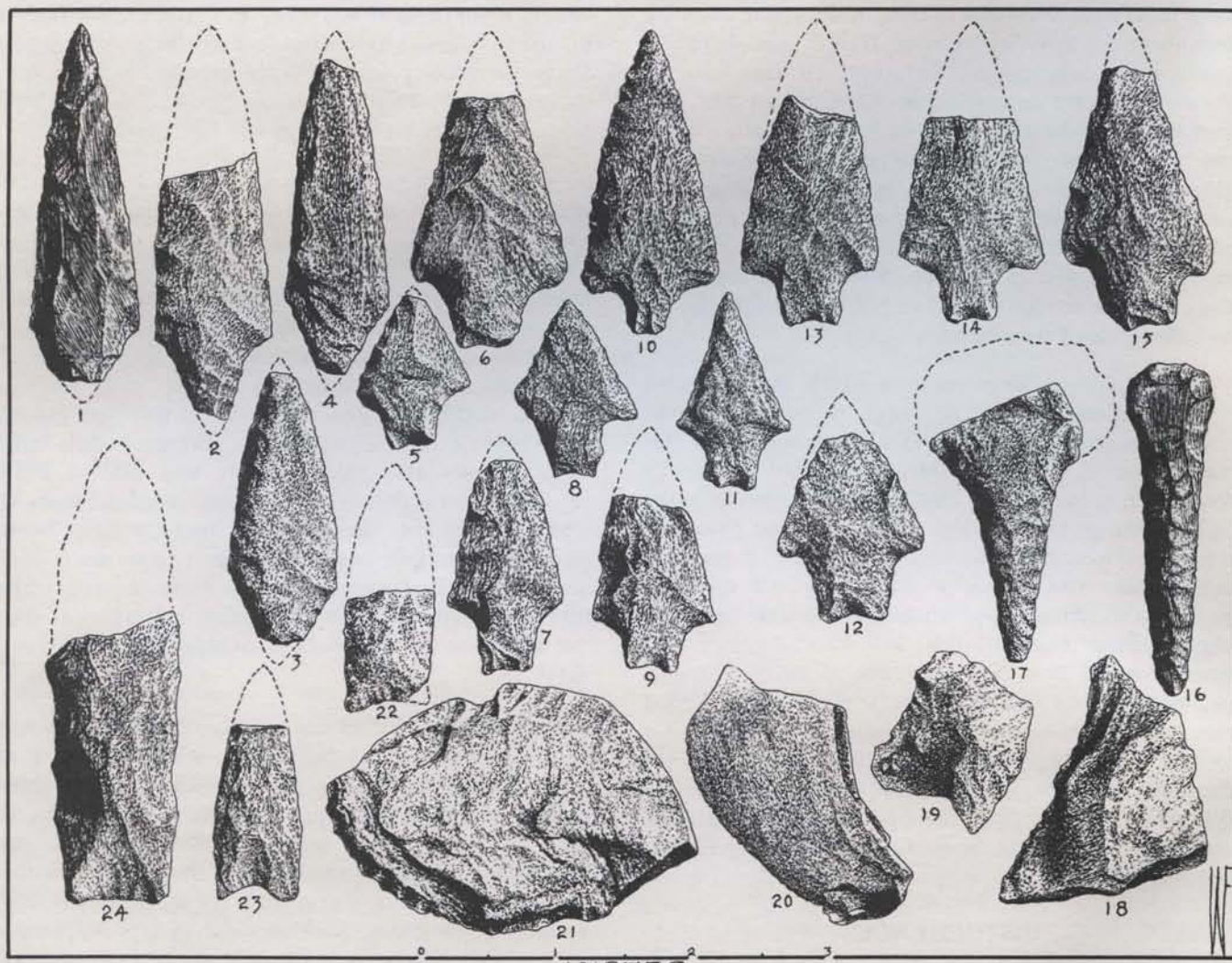


Fig. 1. EARLY ARCHAIC RECOVERIES, Wilcox Brook Site, Typologically selected as to culture affiliation. 1-4, Corner-removed #8; 5-15, Corner-removed #5, Projectiles; 16, 17, Expanded Base Drill; 18, 19, Shaft Scraper (woodworking); 20, 21, Flake Knife (21 Leaf Knife Preform); 22-24, Parallel Stem Projectile (Early Phase) . . . 15 and 24 on white sand; 5-9, 13, 14, 16-22, on levels from 8" to 3" below Junction; 10-12, 23, out of context in the loam.



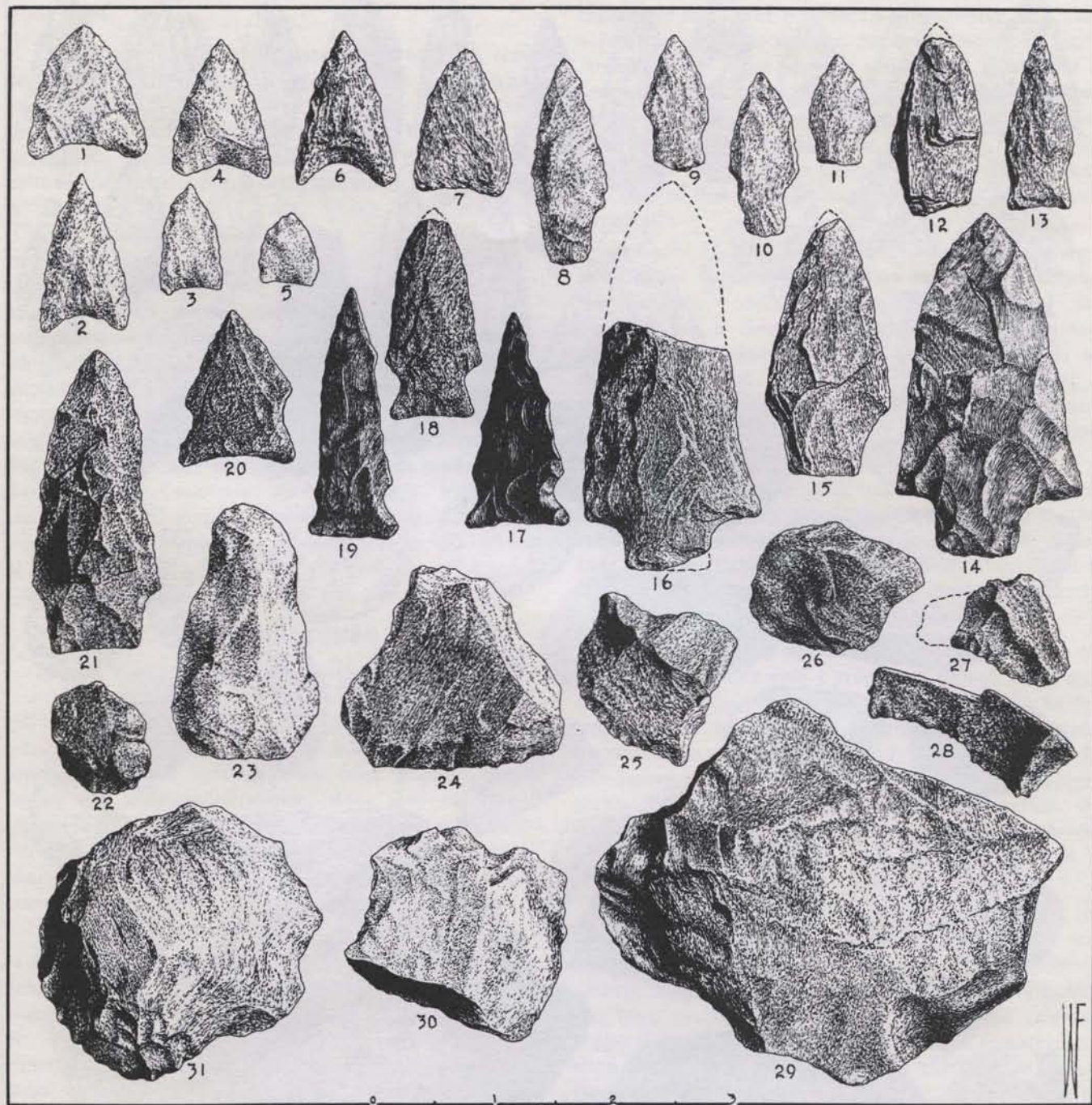


Fig. 2. LATE ARCHAIC RECOVERIES, Wilcox Brook Site. Typologically selected as to culture affiliation. 1-7, Small Triangular#4, 8, Corner-removed#3, 9-13, Small Stem, 14-16, 24, Corner-removed#7, 17-19, Side-notched#5, 20, Eared#4, Projectiles; 22, Flake Scraper; 23, 24, Stem Scraper; 25-28, Flake Knife; 29, Hand Gouge (stone bowl-making tool, an important diagnostic); 30, Shaft Scraper (woodworking); 31, Steepedge Scraper . . . 1-3, 7-11, 13, 16-31, on levels from 2" below up to Junction; 4-6, 12, 14, 15, out of context in the loam.

the subsoil, which seems to indicate beyond a possible doubt that shellfish were not eaten during the Archaic periods.

Projectile points—the best indicators of culture changes—recovered from the four sections, include 12 main types, as follows. The frequency of each is indicated by numerals in parentheses after each type, following which is noted the deepest stratigraphic depth for one or more specimens of each, when not out of

context. This furnishes data, it would seem, of some value in an interpretation of type relationships to culture sequence: *Small Triangular*#5 (16) at Junction; *Large Triangular* (5) 1" above Junction; *Small Triangular*#4 (14) 1" below Junction; *Small Stem* (38) 2" below Junction; *Eared* (3) at Junction; *Side-notched* (11) 1" below Junction; *Tapered Stem* (2) 1" below Junction; *Corner-removed*#3 (16) at Junction; *Corner-removed*#7 (7) at Junction; *Corner-removed*#5 (28) on white sand; *Corner-removed*#8 (5) all out of context at



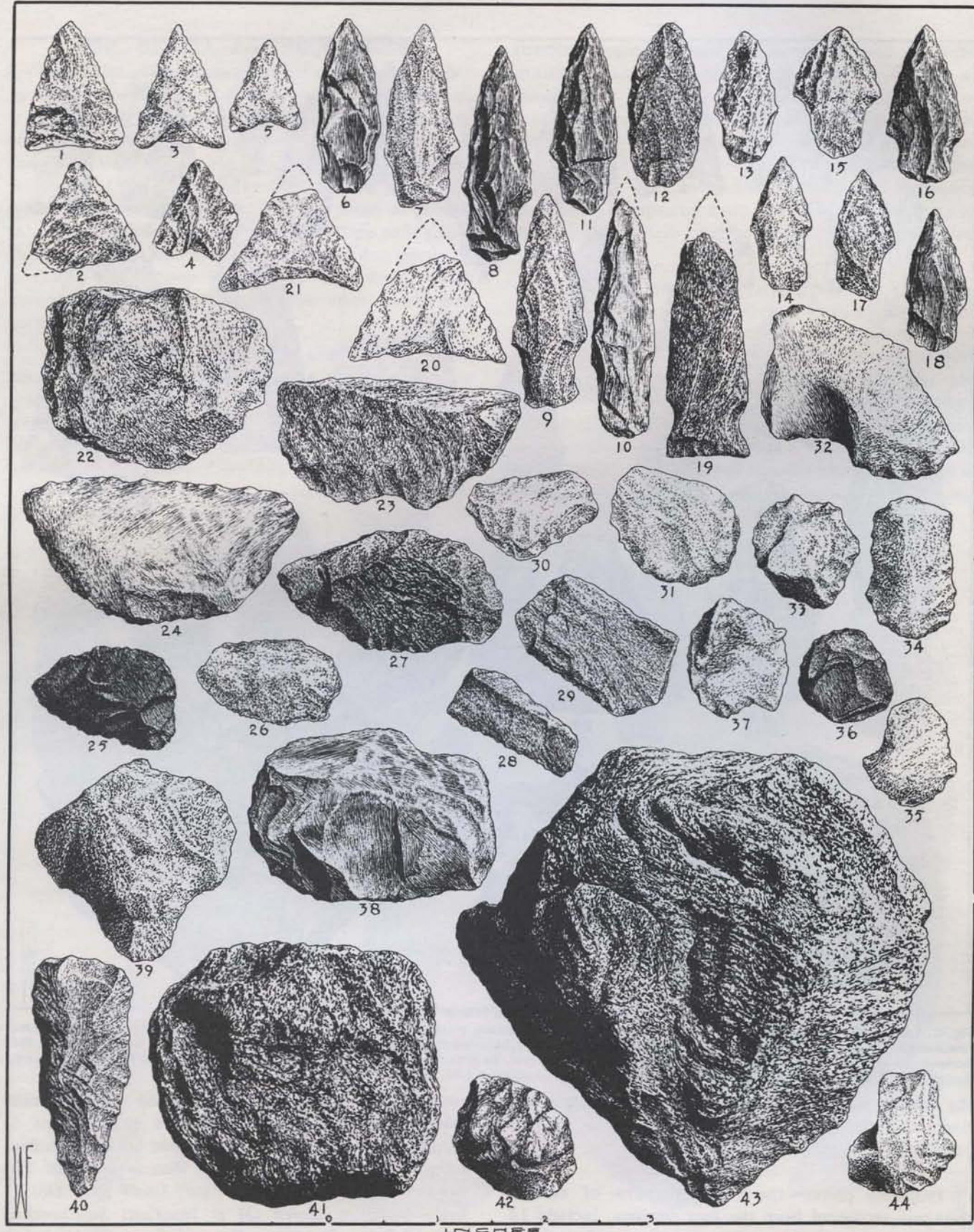


Fig. 3. CERAMIC-WOODLAND RECOVERIES, Wilcox Brook Site. 1-5, Small Triangular#5, 6-11, Corner-removed#3, 12-18, Small Stem, 19, Side-notched#5, 20, 21, Large Triangular Projectiles; 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, Flake Knife; 24, 27, Stemless Knife; 33, 36, 37, Flake Scraper; 32, Shaft Scraper (woodworking); 30, 34, 35, 44, Stem Scraper; 38, Stem Knife; 39, 40, Pipe Bowl Reamer; 41, Oval Scraper; 42, Steepedge Scraper; 43, Triangular Hoe (planting tool, an important diagnostic) . . . all from loam except, 2, 3, 14, 17, 25, 40, from Junction, indicating transitional from Late Archaic.



Junction or above in the loam; *Parallel Stem* (6) on white sand.

This stratigraphic source data indicates point type positions in culture sequence, and tends to equate with excavated evidence from other sites, where the same three culture periods are identified. Flat River site, to name one, reveals from early to late the following culture and diagnostic projectile sequence: *Early Phase of the Early Archaic* (Parallel Stem); *Early Archaic* (Corner-removed#5 and 8); *Late Archaic* (Corner-removed#7, Small Stem, Eared, Small Triangular#4); *Ceramic-Woodland* (Small Triangular#5, Large Triangular, Small Stem). Other projectile types are considered not as diagnostic and are therefore omitted. Illustrations display these projectiles, as well as other implements from the site, shown typologically in the respective cultures to which they have been found to belong (Figs., 1, 2, 3). Among the specimens illustrated will be found many scrapers and knives made from flakes. Their frequency was unusually high, as compared to well-shaped types of these tools. Also, it is worth noting that woodworking Shaft scrapers appeared at all culture levels, indicating the problem of hafting projectiles and other implements was common to all.

### SPECIAL FEATURES

Several feature recoveries require more than casual mention, since they suggest unusual implications. They will be described in this section of the report, and some will be referred to again with an interpretation in the conclusion. These features have been selected from among the excavated evidence, since they represent human accomplishments not frequently encountered. For this reason, a careful examination of their various characteristics seems worthwhile; 6 have been illustrated (Fig. 4).

1) *Stone Hearth #10*. This hearth with an overall size of about 20 x 23" rested on the white sand floor, 12" below Junction and 20" below the ground surface. One heavy hearthstone 12 x 18 x 3" formed the central fire pit, while 2 large fire-cracked cobblestones were at either end of one long edge of the hearthstone. Between these cobbles—disintegrated from many hot fires—were the crumbled remains of other cobbles, which had once provided a back wall for the fireplace. The hearthstone also showed effects of frequent fires; was cracked completely through in several places.

Although the hearth lacked the circular cobble-laid walls of Early Archaic hearths, as identified at other sites, its position on the white sand seemed sufficient evidence to place it as belonging to an early age. This belief was supported by the finding of 2 Early Archaic points on the white sand, while more of them lay only inches above in the yellow subsoil. Because of this association of points and hearth a charcoal sample was taken from around the edges of the heartstone. From

this a radiocarbon date was obtained from the Isotopes laboratory of  $3,800 \pm 100$  years ago. However, this date seems too young to account for the presence of Early Archaic points on or near the white sand. This doubt is supported by a radiocarbon measure of charcoal from an open hearth on white sand at Titicut, in the upper tidewater area of the Taunton River of  $5,750 \pm 720$  years ago. At this white sand level projectile evidence was that of the Early Archaic, as found at the Wilcox Brook site.

2) *Cache #1*. This deposit of 5 artifacts lay at a level of 3" below Junction in the yellow subsoil, probably of the Ceramic-Woodland occupation because of the presence of a Small Triangular#5 projectile with straight lateral sides and concave base, attributed to this culture period. Made of quartzite, it lay among 3 worked blanks and a Flake knife, all made of quartzite. One long thinned side of the knife was worked with fine serrations (Exhibit #3).

3) *Cache #2*. One of an accumulation of worked red felsite pieces that lay about 5" below Junction in the subsoil was a well-shaped Tapered Stem point of the Late Archaic (Exhibit #10). Lying about it appeared 6 chipped blanks of this red felsite stock—apparently prepared for use in making implements.

4) *Dentate Pottery Marker*. This recovery consists of a white quartz flake with 4 prominent prongs along one edge. These seem too deep for the serrations of a knife; might better have served as prongs of a Dentate marker, since the flake is uniformly thin (Exhibit #8). It was recovered from the loam, 2" above Junction, well within the Ceramic-Woodland level of occupation. In support of this culture designation, several potsherds were uncovered in the loam, remnants from at least 2 ceramic pots.

5) *Stone Pipe Bowl*. Two sizable fragments of an interesting pipe bowl made of chlorite appeared in the loam, evidently a product of a Ceramic-Woodland artisan. By projecting the bowl's outline, an illustration has been made, restoring it to its probable original shape (Exhibit #1). No part of the stem remained to show whether this pipe was of the platform or elbow type, although the bowl style suggests the former. It is worthy of note since its shape is unique with polished surfaces.

6) *Bird Effigy Eccentric*. Made of felsite, this unusual artifact was recovered at Junction. It seems to be surface-smoothed from weathering. Its unique shape, which appears to have been deliberately produced by careful chipping, seems to resemble the wings, tail, and beaked head of a bird (Exhibit #9). Whether it was used as an Eccentric fetish, or served as a projectile point cannot be determined. However, it has an unusual shape and is not without counterparts in this area; another one was reported from the Seaver Farm site, Society Bulletin, Vol. 34, #3&4.



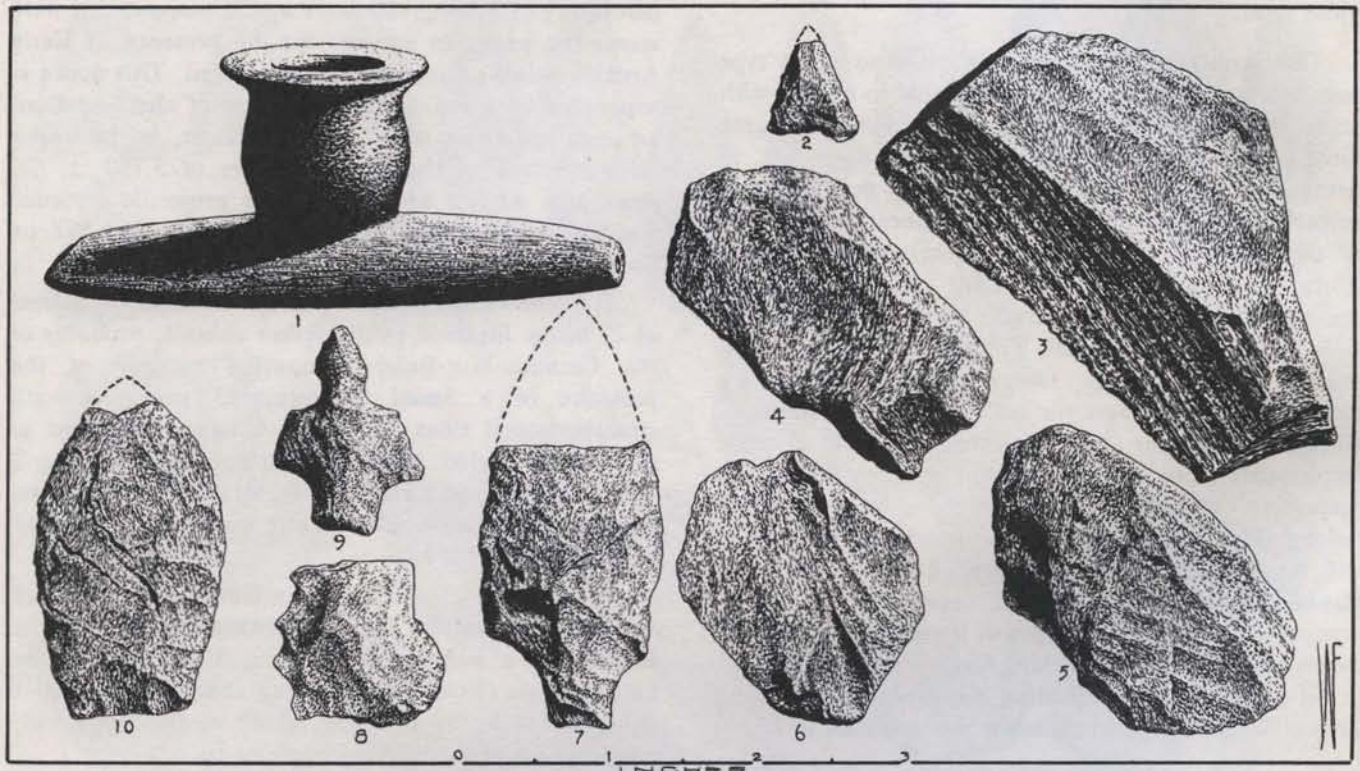


Fig. 4. SPECIAL FEATURE RECOVERIES, Wilcox Brook Site. 1, Platform Pipe Restoration (1/2 of bowl was recovered); 2-6, Cache #1 (probable Ceramic-Woodland provenience because of presence of Small Triangular#5 point); 7, Corner-removed#5; 8, Probable Dentate Pottery Marker; 9, Bird Effigy Eccentric; 10, Cache #2 Tapered Stem Point of red felsite.

7) *Importance of Stem Shaping of Points.* This observation is derived from a study of a large specimen of an Early Archaic Corner-removed#5 projectile (Exhibit #7). Apparently it was out of place in the loam as a result of a large disturbance—possibly colonial—that had brought an immense amount of white sand up to the surface nearby the recovery. A casual glance at this point is all that is needed to impress one with the precise shaping of its stem, as compared to the coarser chipping used in shaping its body. When the writer first examined the point this difference struck him as something worth thinking about. Could it be—a thought that crossed his mind—that the Early Archaic hunter had good reason to spend more time and effort in forming the point's stem than in shaping the body. He might have discovered in hafting this kind of projectile point that unless its stem was exactly made to fit the drilled hole at the end in the pith of the shaft it might work loose and become useless. Whether this would be a valid projection for point-hafting of later cultures can only be a matter of speculation. However, it seems possible that it may have been the practice for the unique hafting requirements of Early Archaic Corner-removed#5, 8 and 9 points, with their relatively narrow in-curving stems, ranging from #5 with a slightly bifurcated base to #8 and 9 with pointed and slightly rounded tips.

## CONCLUSION

Evidence, as brought to light at the Wilcox Brook site, reveals occupancy through the last three culture periods, as similarly found at other sites of the Northeast in this order: Early Archaic, Late Archaic, and Ceramic-Woodland. This statement is based on the typological study of recovered projectile points, the best determinants of culture relationships. Broken down still further the presence of 6 Parallel Stem points at the site suggests an important culture division: Early Phase of the Early Archaic—possibly transitional between the Paleo and the Early Archaic. Parallel Stem points have barely discernible reworked stems that tend to flute, with ground sides usually in evidence. This point type was first recognized at Flat River site and reported in *Society Bulletin*, Vol. 29, #2, as having significant early implications.

Having said this, the radiocarbon date of hearth #10 on white sand of 3,800 years ago, as previously reported, appears too late for the Early Archaic, which is believed to have had its inception more than 6,000 years ago in the Northeast; radiocarbon dated at Titicut. The start of its replacement by the Late Archaics could have occurred about 5,000 year ago. For, during the following 1,000 years, as shown by radio carbon dates at Wapanucket #6 and 8 on Assawompsett Lake, evidence of burial ceremonials of the Late



Archaics were revealed in the form of crematories and secondary burials containing red powdered ocher in many cases.

In an attempt to reconcile the apparent wide time discrepancy between the Early Archaic at Titicut and start of the Late Archaic at Wapanucket, on the one hand, and the white sand occupation at Wilcox Brook on the other, two possibilities might have occurred to explain the later date at Wilcox Brook. One explanation suggests itself as follows. A situation might have occurred in which a group of the Early Archaic hunters remained in the Flat River area long after most of these nomadic hunters are believed to have followed the caribou north into Canada, indicating an overlapping of this culture into the Late Archaic. This could well have taken place, since the new settlers of the Late Archaic from outlying western regions, who began to arrive about 5,000 years ago, were few in number, coming as they probably did in small family groups. Any such retarded settlement, intensified by a probable high mortality rate, could have consumed hundreds of years before all camps of the preceding Early Archaics would have been occupied. Therefore, it is not inconceivable to imagine a prolonged period of a thousand years for the Late Archaic take-over. This could have found an Early Archaic group like that at Wilcox Brook remaining behind and using the dated hearth #10 at the site. Certain it is that whoever the hearth-users were, they were living in tundra-like surroundings on a wind-swept white sand waste. And if the projectile point types found on and near this level are in fact Early Archaic projectiles—as is now generally accepted—then they tend to support this line of reasoning.

A second explanation is a possibility without any clear evidence to prove it, resting mostly on speculation. The dated hearth does not exactly resemble the small circular cobble-lined hearth with side opening attributed to the Early Archaics. While it evidently was made for burning sticks not logs, it might well be a later modified hearth of the Late Archaics, reflecting a barren terrain for the area. The Early Archaic projectiles found at the hearth's level and just above might then be argued as belonging to former settlers of the Early Archaic, whose hearths had become buried in the drifting white sand, while repeated frosts had lifted the points gradually to somewhat higher levels. Excavation of the area was not only limited in scope, but did not explore repeatedly deep into the white sand floor, and so could have missed an occasional Early Archaic hearth buried beneath.

Whichever explanation seems the most reasonable, the fact remains that the site area has been known to have been open pasture land subject to wind action in the memory of man. This being the case, and faced with

evidence of early existence around a hearth on a low-lying white sand level, it could well be that 3,800 years ago life in this open area would have been subjected to much sand drifting. This is not to say that limited forestation did not exist in adjacent depressed areas, where accumulation of humus encouraged tree growth. What is suggested is that the dated-hearth users may have preferred life in this wide open tundra-like terrain, a situation suspiciously reminiscent of Early Archaic existence. In fact, this interpretation appears to fit our first thesis best, and tends to explain during the excavation the stratigraphic closeness of some Early Archaic points to those of the Late Archaic. In fact, the Wilcox Brook radiocarbon date seems to suggest the probability that scattered groups of Early Archaics remained in this area during the first millennium of the Late Archaic. Consequently, they might well have continued to follow their established customs and use of stylized projectiles without much change, and to have lived in more or less close proximity to occasional bands of the Late Archaics.

Of the other features, perhaps the Bird effigy is the most troublesome in deciding what it actually represents. Its point has a definite knob-like head of a bird that appears to have been deliberately made for that purpose. Because of its narrow neck proportions, it is probable that it was never intended for the point of a projectile with such weak construction. Therefore, it appears logical to interpret the form's remaining characteristics as the wings and tail of a bird. Hence it doubtless is an effigy fetish that must have had some useful purpose. In the hands of a shaman it is conceivable that it may have had some mystical value; might even represent the Thunder Bird in diminutive form, a much revered spirit with magical powers. Appearing as it did at Junction, probably within the Late Archaic occupation, it would be in the right culture association, since this age is known to have used ceremonial rites in the burial of the dead. Furthermore, a spirit motivated people of this kind would doubtless have used fetishes in other shaman-directed activities, such as that of curing the sick.

As for the Dentate marker found in the loam along with a few potsherds, this association seems suggestive that this tool may have been what its name implies. This is only a small piece of evidence, of course, but one that indicates the making of ceramic pots at the site during the Ceramic-Woodland occupation.

Mention should be made of the unusually large quantity of recovered knives and scrapers made from flakes of all sizes. While the appearance of these artifacts is by no means uncommon at most sites, to find them in such high frequency is unusual. For one thing, this is convincing evidence that manufacture of



Flake tools was of common occurrence as the need arose. It is of interest to note in a review of archaeological discoveries in the Old World that some 35,000 years ago certain groups of Neanderthal people are known by the Flake tools they made to the exclusion of more sophisticated forms. Undoubtedly, aboriginal man has been wedded to Flake tools ever since he produced flakes in the successful shaping of the most useful implement of all, the projectile point.

So, after three years' work, another site in Rhode Island has come to a close, forced out by the encroachment of soil removal operations. However, in the time devoted to its excavations, evidence has been uncovered of certain provocative features. Perhaps the most intriguing one is that suggested by the dated hearth on wind-swept white sand. Taken at its face value the assumption is that people were living at the white sand level about 3,800 years ago. And if projectile points of the Early Archaic—Parallel Stem and Corner-removed#5 appearing first on the white sand—were the products of those who built and used the hearth, then we have reason to project an Early Archaic culture for

both.

And finally, it seems worth emphasizing as formerly stated that this relationship suggests that some bands of Early Archaics had not gone north in the gradual exodus of these early hunters, as evidenced at Wilcox Brook. Evidently they continued to use their preferred types of projectile points, especially Corner-removed#5, but had modified the shape of their stone hearth from the circular form with side opening and small fire pit that formerly had prevailed. While they may have come in contact infrequently with an occasional band of Late Archaics, these new settlers were too few in number—doubtless remained that way for centuries—to have exerted cultural changes upon the Early Archaic holdovers, whose hunting practices were too firmly entrenched to yield to change. However, in time, when the Late Archaics had increased sufficiently in numbers, their culture became the dominant one of the region, supplanting that which had gone before.

Bronson Museum,  
October 26, 1973



## A FLUTED POINT RECOVERY AT TITICUT

JOSEPH MELLO

In the spring of 1972 I decided to open a small excavation that would not be more than I could undertake in my spare time. Report of previous work at the Titicut site in Bridgewater on the upper reaches of the Taunton River at tidewater interested me as a good location to investigate. After making inquiry, Victor Auglis, the caretaker of the property was located. He kindly granted permission to excavate upon being assured that the work would be carefully conducted and adequately reported. He led me to a large depression in the woods, somewhat circular in shape with about a 200 foot diameter, and suggested it as a likely area for my excavation, since, as he said, no one had ever dug there. I took his advice and laid out a small area 12 x 18 feet in size, consisting of six 6 foot squares.

In carrying out the work of excavating and recording, I am grateful to the Editor for his assistance in identification of artifacts and in the preparation of this report. While the area excavated was relatively

small, it produced enough evidence at different levels to make this account seem worthwhile. My time at the site was very limited, so that it was not until the summer of 1973 that excavation of all six squares was completed.

The designated area to be dug was situated toward one edge of the prescribed extensive depression, about 35 feet distant from a pump that marked the location of an old well. It seemed far enough away from any possible disturbance that might have occurred when the well was dug many years ago. My excavating and recording of recoveries was performed in an approved fashion, each recognizable artifact uncovered being index marked and outlined on a card. All facts were recorded for each recovered artifact concerning its location in the square, the stratum where found, and its depth in the ground as related to the Junction: the line of demarcation between loam and subsoil. The work of excavating was performed with the aid of a trowel and short handled hoe by scraping. Only once at a depth of



about 5" in the loam were the scrapings screened. At this spot tiny crushed clam shell particles appeared. They seemed at first sight to be suggestive of human calcined bone fragments, and were thought to be perhaps from a cremation burial that warranted special treatment. Excavation was persistently carried down to, and into the white sand for a few inches throughout the entire excavated area.

### SOIL STRATIGRAPHY

So that a better idea may be had of the relationship of recovered artifacts to their levels of deposition, a brief review seems advisable of the soil layers encountered, including mention of the 23 recorded artifacts and several features they yielded.

*Humus.* The top layer consisted of about 12" of loam. In it appeared scattered firestones, many quartz chips, and 14 artifacts, all presumably of the Ceramic-Woodland period. They included in part: several Small Stem points and one Corner-removed#3 point; knives; Rubbingstone; Hammerstone; and a Pipe bowl reamer. At one place in the humus, as noted above, finely crushed remains of clam shells were found.

*Junction.* Between the loam and yellow subsoil occurred this undisturbed layer of brownish-stained soil with a thickness of about 3". Beside a few chips, it yielded 4 artifacts: a Side-notched#5 finely-made flint point; 2 Corner-removed#7 quartz points—found together; and a combination Stem scraper and reamer of flint, all of the Late Archaic period.

*Yellow Soil.* Lying below Junction appeared 12 to 13" of a brownish-yellow soil that was hard packed. In it occurred some firstones, scattered flakes, and a workshop consisting of heavy concentration of quartz chips. Uncovered 1" below Junction was a Late Archaic Corner-removed#7 felsite point. And at 3" below Junction appeared 2 Early Archaic points: Corner-removed#5 and 8.

*Yellow Sand.* Directly below the Yellow soil layer a very hard-packed layer of yellowish sand was encountered. This appeared to be yellow-stained white sand caused by leaching, which proved difficult to work. It had a thickness of about 5" and contained very few pebbles. No flakes or firestones were found in this layer, which nevertheless was carefully dug. This persistent effort resulted in uncovering the prize of this dig, a Fluted point of flint. And lying beside it appeared a probable hunting knife of perhaps the Paleo period, made of translucent quartzite. They lay at the bottom of this yellow sand layer, 1" above the white sand.

*White Sand.* Underlying the layer of yellow sand occurred white sand with an undetermined depth. It contained quite a few pebbles, some as much as an inch in diameter. They were packed tightly in fine white sand that became coarser at times. Although excavation

was carried a few inches into this bottom white sand layer, no flakes or artifacts were found in it.

A schematic drawing of selected projectile points, knives, and Pipe Bowl reamer has been made, showing their respective stratigraphic levels where found (Fig. 5). Since this account describes the finding of a Fluted point, something more than a recounting of its recovery seems essential as a part of this report. So the Editor has kindly added a conclusion with certain remarks bearing upon the Fluted point and knife recovery. His experience working on two occasions at the Bull Brook Paleo site has given him a more than passing interest in Fluted points. (The Titicut Fluted point, kindly donated by Mr. Mello, is now on display in the Bronsom Museum - Ed.).

### CONCLUSION

That the Titicut site has at last yielded a Fluted point is in itself an anomaly in the eyes of some, who formerly spent untold hours at the site without turning up a trace of Paleo evidence. To think that now at a later day, and at what seems to be a most unlikely spot at the site, a Fluted point has at last been uncovered is difficult for a few to accept. And yet, the facts presented in this paper speak for themselves, and are born out by the meticulous detailed work of the digger in the excavating and recording of artifacts. Also, it is worth noting that the successive depths of the recovered projectile points, as related to their several types, are in keeping with the sequence of cultures to which at other sites similar types have been found to belong. And beside such convincing evidence the appearance of a large Stemless knife made of exotic translucent quartzite, lying beside the Fluted point, provides a relationship worthy of note. For the knife is reminiscent of a kind of hunting blade associated with Paleo hunters at other sites. However, because no chips and other evidence of resident occupation appeared in the yellow sand layer, the Fluted point and knife are probably stray deposits inadvertently left behind perhaps by some Paleo hunter. And another thing that seems to support this thesis is their presence in a large depressed area that in Paleo times might well have been a water hole, frequented by game of the day. Certain it is that in past historic times a well was dug within the depression, denoting the presence of water. The accountability of the other upper strata artifacts, as recorded, might suggest encampments here of later day residents near the edge of a water supply of some kind. While all of this reasoning is hypothetical in nature, it is offered as a possible explanation of the excavated evidence.

Analysis of the Fluted point itself is important, if for no other reason than to try to establish its relative position in the Northeast. It is made of glossy flint with a clouded amber and gray coloration — an exotic flint from an unknown source. It may be that this kind of



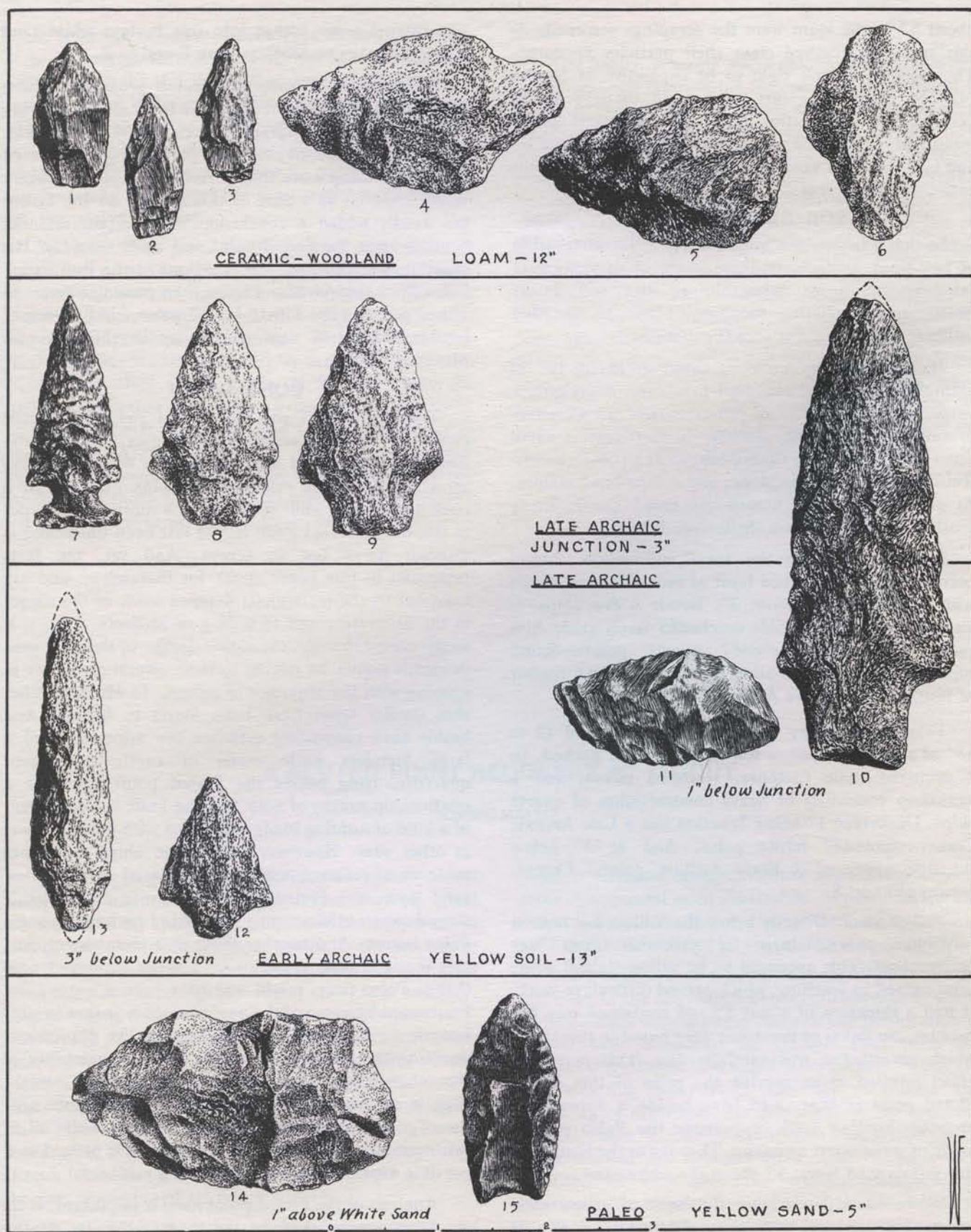


Fig. 5. STRATIGRAPHIC LEVELS OF SELECTED ARTIFACT RECOVERIES, Titicut Site. 1-3, Small Stem Pt.; 4, 5, Stem and Stemless Knives; 6, Pipe Bowl Reamer; 7, Side-notched #5 Pt.; 8-10, Corner-removed #7 Pt.; 11, Flake Knife; 12, Corner-removed #5 Pt.; 13, Corner-removed #8 Pt.; 14, Stemless Knife (translucent quartzite); 15, Fluted Pt. (clouded amber and gray glossy flint).



flint has its counterpart among the many different colored flints of the Bull Brook Fluted points. In any event, as flint is not indigenous to New England, the site point represents an importation, doubtless derived from some source in outlying flint producing regions, either in New York, Pennsylvania, or regions further south.

When it comes to the shape of the Titicut Fluted point, its base is drawn in too much for the style found at Bull Brook. Whatever its source, it displays finely retouched edges that do not appear to be ground; is noticeably thin, fluted both sides. On the reverse side, not illustrated, three fluting attempts in producing the final flute are in evidence. Its overall shape fits conveniently the form found among many Naco and Lehner site Clovis fluted points of the West, although these points usually show shorter flutes; are made of thicker stock, and have a much coarser marginal retouch. While the general Clovis likeness is interesting, it probably is not significant, as far as a close relationship is concerned. It seems more likely that the Titicut point belongs somewhere within the assembly of eastern coastal Paleo points of this area. Here, a variety of

Fluted point shapes are to be found that are loosely characterized as Clovis-like.

An impressive fact about this Titicut excavation is the stratigraphic bottom position of the Fluted point, as related to projectile point recoveries of later cultures. The illustration (Fig. 5) that presents a seriated display of site points in the various strata where found is of interest. For the fact is that the respective depths of the several types follow the accepted point sequence of the Northeast, with the Fluted point appearing at the bottom, as the earliest evidence of man in this area. Somewhere around 10,000 years ago—carbon-14 dated 9,300 years ago at the Bull Brook site—and for probably two millennia thereafter Paleo hunters roamed the tundra of Atlantic coastal regions. And, because of their highly nomadic state and probable small numbers, occupational sites with concentrated Paleo remains are scarce. Consequently, finding a stray Fluted point doubtless is to be expected as more probable than locating Paleo camp remains.

Taunton, Mass.

August 14, 1973



## A MANZANITA ISLAND CERAMIC POT RECOVERY

ELIZABETH KNAP FARMER

Archaeology attracted my attention when we moved to Watertown, New York, and I became actively engaged in excavating an island site on the St. Lawrence River. Our home was close enough to the river, so that I was able to spend the entire summer on it, rather than only two or three weeks as previously. On our family island, for many years we had found at various places an occasional aboriginal artifact, such as a potsherd, a projectile point, or perhaps a curiously smoothed stone. One year an unusually fine, long, ground slate spear point was picked up near the shore in shallow water, where it lay among pebbles just back of the former boat house. At another time someone found a celt lying under a cover of sawdust near our old icehouse. However, my interest had been only casual until the spring of 1961, when I decided to try serious digging at a spot where I had previously found on the surface several potsherds and a point or two.

The Island on the St. Lawrence, the locale of this

report, is called Manzanita. It is one of the Thousand Islands and lies about a mile from the American shore across Chippewa Bay, a large body of water. The Canadian shore is about 3 miles distant, with Lake Ontario, the river's source, about 40 miles to the southwest. Manzanita Island is about 7 acres in size, somewhat oval in shape, with a sizable bay facing the northwest and a smaller bay on the opposite side. A long point of land at one end faces the southwest, while two small islands lie nearby, one at the foot, the other to the north. The Island is relatively flat toward the point and along the side facing the American shore. The land rises slightly through the center and terminates on the northern side in an uneven expanse, including a cliff and a noticeable hollow; a map of the Island provides most details (Fig. 6).

The site on the Island where the restored pot—the subject of this paper—and a Platform pipe were found was at a spot where my excavation first took place in



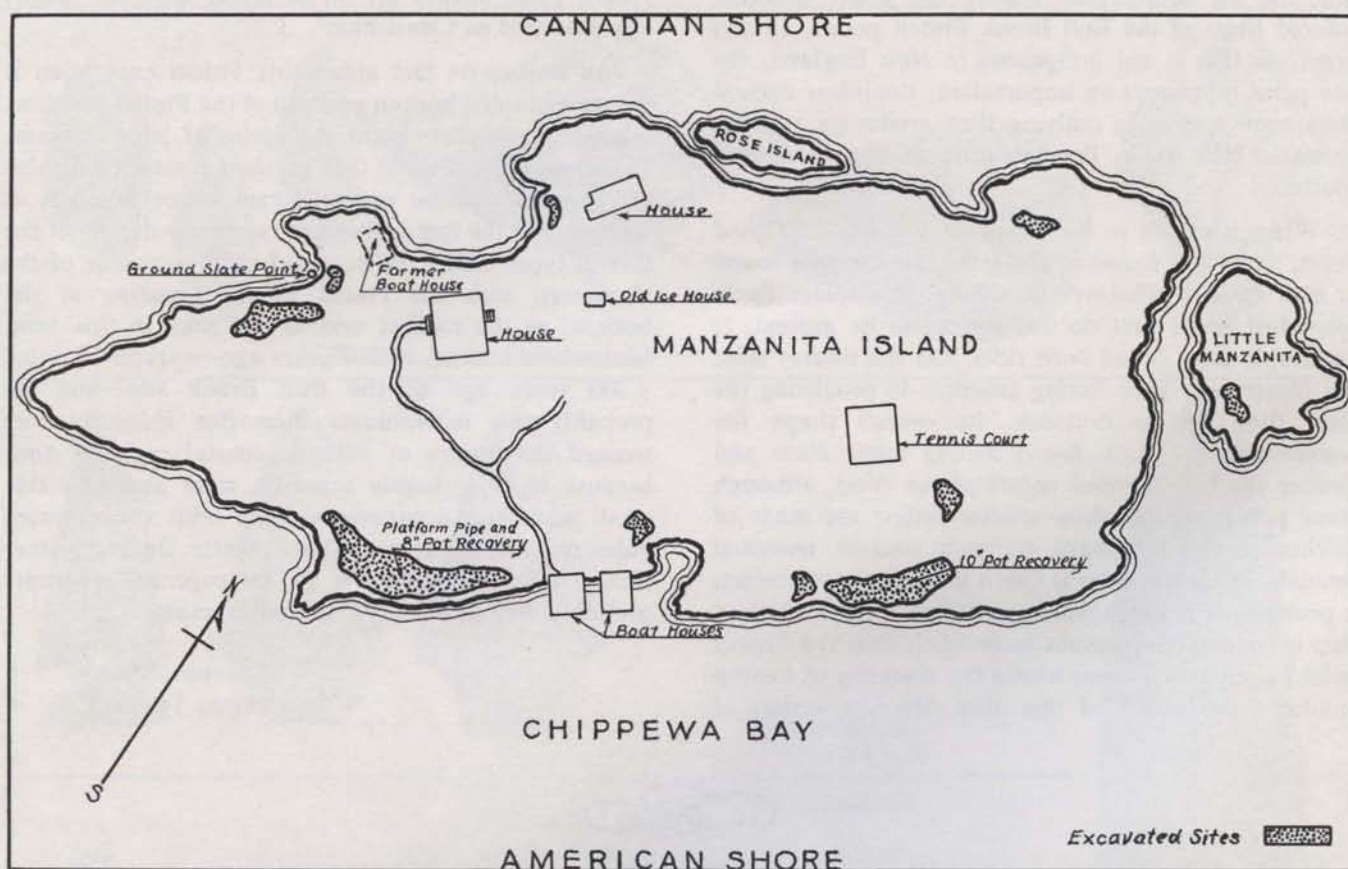


Fig. 6. MAP OF MANZANITA ISLAND, one of the Thousand Islands, St. Lawrence River.

1961. As shown on the map, it is situated on the southeastern side of the Island, facing the American shore, where the land slopes gradually, terminating in 2 or 3 feet of exposed rocks at the water's edge. Part of the area is covered with blueberry bushes, oaks, hickories, and pines. A firmly rooted grass lies under foot, underlaid by 1 to 4" of dark humus, below which appears a stony subsoil. At the shore line nearby a growth of sumac, golden rod, and a few alders appear among the rocks, rooted in pebbly sandy soil. Most all recovered artifacts at this site occurred above the subsoil in the humus, with a few sherds appearing as surface finds at the site's edge.

At this and two other sites on the Island I was fortunate in recovering, along with hundreds of potsherds, many stone implements including, projectile points of slate, flint, and quartz; a bar amulet; pendants; knives; a grooved adz; drills and awls; a Platform pipe—description of which follows; scrapers of all kinds; rubbing and abrading stones for various purposes; a sinewstone; celts and some bone implements. Often the recovered items were fractured, but at least a third are whole. My entire collection of perfect artifacts in good condition numbers approximately 200.

As previously mentioned, an outstanding recovery at this site was a Platform stone pipe, undamaged. It

suddenly appeared to view after excavating had reached a depth in the humus of about 3", among a tangle of blueberry bushes and the intruding roots of a hickory tree. First, however, I uncovered at this depth part of the bowl of a small Elbow stone pipe of chlorite. And then it happened. Just below this pipe fragment the Platform pipe appeared. It is small in size about 3½" long, with a unique elliptical base, and is made of polished chlorite, a most exciting find as may be imagined. Its bowl is quite short and has a slight flange about its edge. An interesting trait, seldom seen on stone pipes, is an incised engraving on the bottom of its elliptical base. It consists of two antlered deer with a vague outline of a possible third, besides a faint outline of a leaf, or perhaps it is a feather. It may be of interest to note that this recovery lay only about 4 feet from the many sherds of the pot that eventually was restored—description to follow. An illustration of the pipe is included to give some idea of its unusual traits (Fig. 7).

Among many sherds recovered from two locations were the prominent remains of two pots: the larger one with an estimated 10" diameter mouth opening, and the smaller vessel with an 8" diameter opening, the restored pot of this report. Each came from a different excavated site that lay about 1,000 feet apart on the southeastern side of the Island, separated by a swamp and a rocky



elevation. While the larger 10" pot had more elaborate decorations over much of its body, the smaller 8" one seemed better suited for a restoration. Consequently, of the two, an examination confined to the conditions surrounding the latter's recovery seems more important. Its broken sherds were uncovered 4 feet, as formerly mentioned, from the spot where the Platform pipe appeared, within an area of about 2 square feet. Interestingly, part of this area extended toward a lilac bush that had been planted many years ago. And as our excavation approached this bush, family resistance against removal of any part of it was encountered, with the result that three quarters of it still remains untouched.

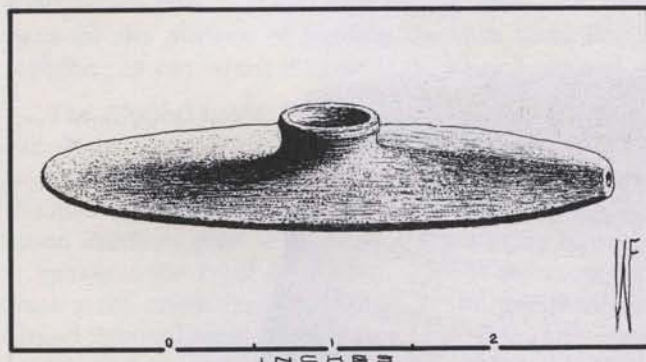


Fig. 7. ELLIPTICAL PLATFORM PIPE (chlorite), Manzanita Island, from same site location as Manzanita pot.

Two summers were needed to recover the many sherds of the pot that eventually was restored, as I had been delayed in getting started until August of the first summer. The following year my excavation of the same area continued to uncover more sherds from the same pot. It had become broken into many pieces, some quite small in size, which posed a considerable problem in working them into the restoration. Furthermore, the work was hampered by the presence of some sherds from at least two other pots that were scattered among the remains. Most of the sherds came from among the roots of blueberry bushes in the underlying humus, with a few being recovered as surface finds on the perimeter of the dug area. It appears quite likely, as a result of this concentration of sherds from more than one pot, that this deposit had been a refuse pit, shallow in nature on account of the hard-to-dig stony subsoil that lay beneath. This condition apparently had permitted some sherds to work to the surface, as a result of yearly flooding by the river and subsequent frost heaving.

In preparation for the final restoration of the 8" pot, I spent many winter months matching, joining, and gluing contiguous sherds together, some of which were in tiny pieces. And, while it took two summers to recover all available sherds, it required three winters and many hours to assemble two or three body sections and several portions of the rim. This preliminary work I

realized had to be done before the shape of the pot could be determined for its restoration.

During this period of discovery and sherd assembly the Editor of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society had given me much encouragement and advice. By this time I had become an enthusiastic member of the Society, and had begun to realize that some importance was connected to my digging labors. As the sherd assemblies began to take shape, the Editor offered to attempt a restoration of the pot with an illustration to accompany a report of its recovery for publication in the Society Bulletin. His offer was gratefully accepted, which accounts for this short report of my participation in the project. And at last, after waiting some time, not being willing to trust my sherd assemblies to the U.S. Postal Service, suitable transportation was secured that placed them in the hands of the Editor.

With final restoration and illustration of the pot accomplished (Fig. 8), I have asked the Editor to describe its traits and comment as to how they may denote its culture source. Also, it seems to me essential that the Platform pipe should be included in the discussion, as possible contributing evidence in establishing the culture involved. It is hoped that a connection may be discovered to reveal the relationship that may have existed between the ceramic potters of the St. Lawrence and those of New England.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE MANZANITA POT

This vessel is a medium sized conoidal based pot with an 8" diameter mouth opening; stands about 11" high, and has a slightly constricted neck. The ware has a thickness of 1/4" that tends to vary somewhat over or under this thickness throughout the body, with a uniform reduction to 1/8" at the rim's edge. It has medium to coarse mineral temper, and is well fired to a comparatively hard consistency. Coiling construction is in evidence but to a minimum degree because of skillful joining of coils. Perhaps the most significant traits to be noted are the several design motifs that cover most of the pot's exterior. Its interior is more or less evenly stick-wiped, while the outside has design work of the dentate technique, except for a small amount of rocker-stamp. More specifically, starting at the rim and reaching down 1/4" on the inside there is a continuous band of short oblique dentate lines encircling the mouth. The rim edge is uniformly even and flat, and is completely decorated by closely arranged dentate marks running crosswise. Outside the rim and extending down about 3/4" there is a continuous arrangement encircling the pot's neck of closely spaced, fine vertical dentate lines, consisting of tiny teeth marks scarcely discernible. Directly below and covering about 2/3rds. of the body are some 26 or more 1/8" fretted horizontal dentate bands that surround the pot—a narrow undecorated space occurs between each band. And



finally, extending below the bands for about 2" toward the pointed base are rocker-stamp impressions. Underneath the design treatments and extending over the base the clay has been left smooth.

This completes description of the pot and its surface decorations. They have a great deal to do with determining the pot's culture relationship, and will be referred to again in the course of our analysis. As the pot's presence in the upper St. Lawrence River Valley is in the New York area, covered by the extensive research of W. R. Ritchie, it seems best to have our review begin with his statements dealing with pottery from that region, classified as belonging to the Point Peninsula

Focus. In general, after comparing the pot's traits with those of this area, extending along the southern shore of Lake Ontario and environs, it doubtless should be considered as a product of Point Peninsula—stylized by Ritchie as rocker-stamped (dentate variety)—probably toward the end of the period, A.D. 630-740. However, since the design work on the Manzanita pot is predominantly dentate with only a small section of rocker-stamp, its style might better be identified as dentate (rocker-stamped).

At this point it seems worthwhile to review Ritchie's description of this kind of pottery to realize how similar its traits are to those of the Manzanita pot. Ritchie says:

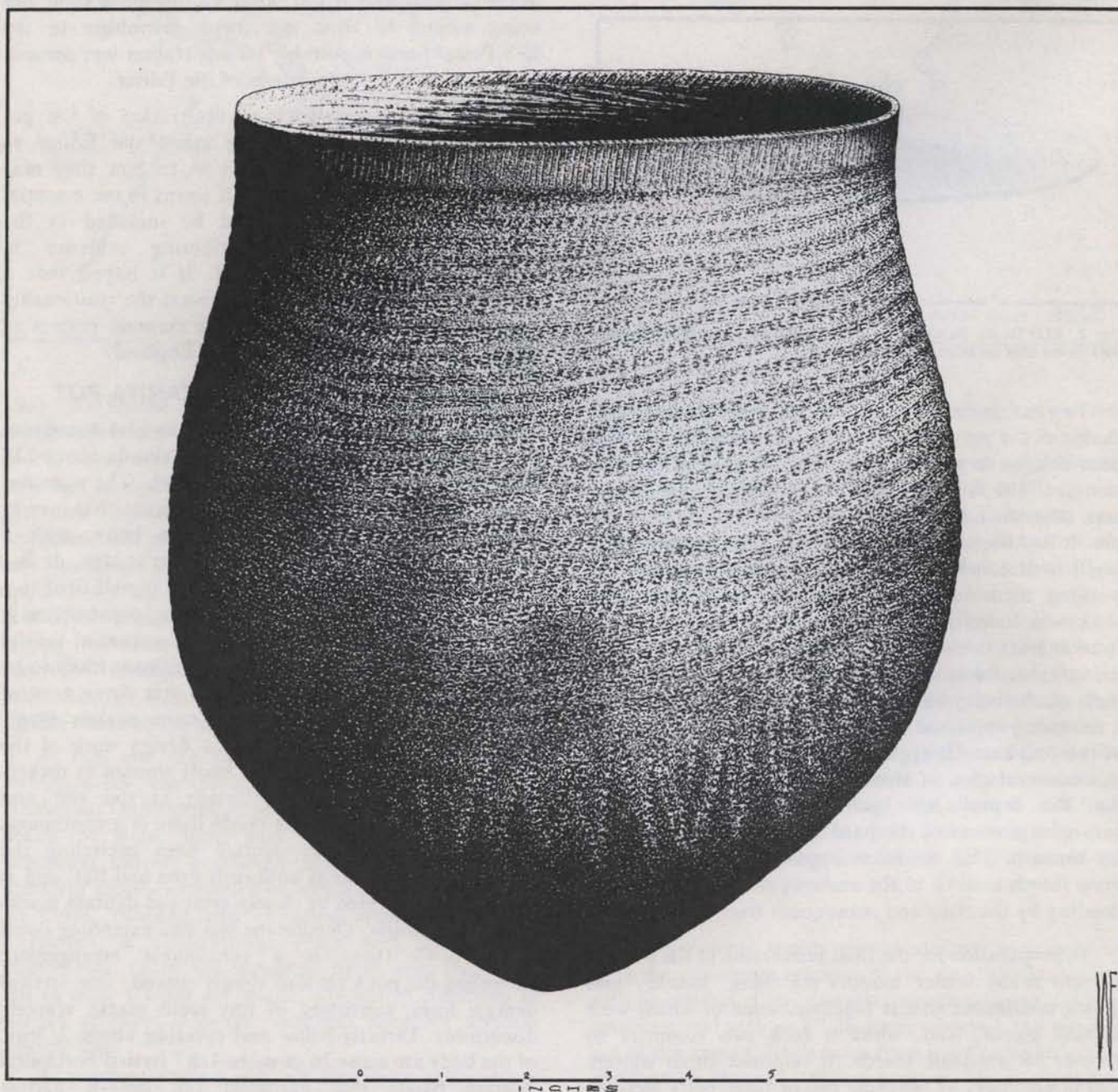


Fig. 8. MANZANITA POT (restored), Manzanita Island, St. Lawrence River.



"Point Peninsula pottery is in general well made and decorated. It pertains to cooking pots of approximately two to four quart capacity, medium to coarse grit-tempered with conoidal bases and nearly straight to moderately everted collarless rims. Prevailing characteristics are a narrow, rounded, or wedge-shaped, out-turning lip; more pinched and outflaring in the oldest examples, but becoming progressively rounder in intermediate stages, which *develop into a slightly flattened form* in later times." [This latter trait is present in the Manzanita pot, hence the suggested date]. Ritchie goes on to say: "A common characteristic is what has been called interior channeling [our term is stick-wiping], produced by a scraping of fillet constructed pots." [This stick-wiping seems to have been for the purpose of binding the coils more firmly together; an important diagnostic of Stage 2 pottery].

The elliptical based Platform pipe uncovered nearby the Manzanita pot's remains is another piece of evidence that may link this restored pot to Point Peninsula pottery. Ritchie illustrates a larger elliptical based Platform pipe of greenish black steatite imputed to belong to the Point Peninsula Focus. It was recovered from a red ocher furnished grave at the mouth of the Grand River where it empties into Lake Erie, just south of the western end of Lake Ontario in Canada. From there easterly the region along the southern shore of Lake Ontario including the area around the headwater of the St. Lawrence has produced artifacts of the Point Peninsula Focus. And it could well be that the people of this period moved the few miles intervening down the river to Manzanita Island, as well as to other islands in that vicinity, if the Island pipe's elliptical style together with the restored pot have a meaning to impart.

### CONCLUSION

After studying the related evidence involving the Manzanita pot and its presumed Point Peninsula association, a comparison of its traits with pottery of New England suggests an interesting relationship. To let this opportunity pass without considering what connections, if any, existed between St. Lawrence River potters and those of New England would serve no good purpose. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to extend this investigation to include research into the ceramic development that took place in New England, a coastal section of the Northeast.

It appears self-evident from an overall study of ceramics that pottery-making came into New England by diffusion from western located regions, but probably not in a direct course. Rather, it doubtless followed circuitous routes, avoiding the Appalachians, and so arrived from points south or north, presumably by water. However, in conformity to the known slow and impeded movement of ideas in aboriginal times, it probably required a great many years to transmit

improvements in pottery-making from western culture centers to New England. As it would now appear, independent invention, found more or less in all human effort, was in this coastal area quite likely stifled to some extent by diffusive ideas that filtered in from time to time from outside regions. This situation involving ceramic improvements becomes apparent through comparison, such as the one to follow, between the Manzanita pot and pottery types of New England.

Consider first the fact that the Island pot has characteristics that place it in this coastal region's Stage 2 period. However, while it is similar so far as its rocker-stamp and dentate techniques are concerned, including its conoidal form with stick-wiped interior and medium to coarse mineral temper, it is dissimilar as to the extent of design work that covers almost its entire body, as well as presence of decoration inside the rim. A further dissimilarity consists in its regimented narrow, flat-faced decorated rim, superbly accomplished, as compared to the generally irregular flat rims of Stage 2 New England pots. These obvious improvements over the simpler Stage 2 traits in the east bespeak a marked advance by the St. Lawrence potters over those of New England for the same ceramic period. Furthermore, it is not until Stage 3 times in the east that all of the mentioned dissimilarities finally appear and become incorporated in pottery of that period.

From this brief description it appears probable that New England Stage 3 pots represent to some extent improvements over former Stage 2 vessels as a result of diffusive impulses received from western culture centers, rather than as a result of independent invention. How such creative incentives arrived from the St. Lawrence region is of course speculative. However, one popular water-connecting route is known to have been the Richelieu-Champlain-Hudson bypass. Over this course diffusive ideas would have ultimately entered New England from the Sound. The probability of this entry seems more likely than down the St. Lawrence to its mouth and then by sea coast navigation—an extremely long and unlikely entry. Such diffusion, obviously, does not account for all the improvements noted in Stage 3 ware in the east over that of Stage 2. It is offered merely as an indication of a probable diffusive movement eastward of ideas that required years, even a century perhaps to reach New England potters and then to be adopted in bringing about pottery-making improvements.

The question often arises in the minds of many as to how conoidal based vessels, like the Manzanita pot, with no accommodation for tripod support over the fire, were used in cooking liquid foods. Two sources of information are quite explanatory, and are worth stopping a moment to consider. First, we might examine a drawing by the artist, Jacques le Moyne—



engraved by De Bry—with explanatory notes. Le Mogne accompanied the French Expedition to Florida under Rene de Laudonniere in 1564; and speaking of the natives preparing a feast, he says: "These cooks take a great round earthenware pot—which they bake so well that water can be boiled therein as easily as in our own kettles—and put it over a large wood fire. The head cook empties the raw food into the pot; another keeps the fire going with a small hand fan." The illustration shows the pot resting in the embers of the fire with burning sticks of wood all around it for support.

The other reference is somewhat more revealing. It consists of a drawing and descriptive comments by Master John White, artist, who was sent to the New World [Virginia] by her Majesty the Queen with an expedition in 1584; his drawing was engraved by De Bry. White says: "Their women have the greatest skill in making large earthen pots, which are so fine that not even our own potters can make any better. They set them upon a pile of earth and then put wood underneath and kindle it, taking great care that the fire burns evenly on all sides. They fill the pot with water, then put fruit, meat, and fish into it and let it boil together as in a gallimaufry, which the Spaniards call olla podrida."

From these references it may be seen that the pot rests in the embers of the fire, and is kept from tipping over in these two instances by surrounding it with burning sticks of wood. The pots involved had rounded bottoms and so were less likely to tip over, as it would seem, than pointed based ones like the Manzanita pot.

However, in the case of the latter, it is believed that its pointed base would have been firmly set in the coals of the fire, which tended to hold it upright. And as added support it is believed that cobbles may have been placed around it. It may well be that some of the larger fire-stones found scattered about at most camp sites were used as pot supports in the hearth.

Finally, to summarize, this review of possible connections between a Thousand Island pot of the St. Lawrence and pottery developments in New England is revealing. It discloses to some extent a dependence of potters of this coastal region upon new techniques and advanced ideas diffused from ceramic culture centers to the west. More precisely, the tendency to accept improvements and utilize them in pottery-making by coastal potters may be detected, as has been shown, through a comparison of advanced Stage 2 traits of the Manzanita pot to Stage 2 traits of New England, with diffusion of these traits and their eventual emergence in Stage 3 coastal pots. For example, as has been pointed out, coastal Stage 3 pots reveal some body and design traits for the first time that are present in Stage 2 pots from regions beyond the Appalachians, such as the Manzanita pot of the Point Peninsula Focus. Therefore, New England potters, while exercising some creative inventiveness, seem to have relied to a considerable extent upon ideas, which belatedly drifted into this area from more advanced pottery-making centers outside.

Watertown, New York  
March 3, 1974



## AN ENGRAVED WING ATLATL WEIGHT

WILLIAM B. TAYLOR

In the spring of 1971 permission was sought and granted to excavate a section of land next to the Seaver Farm in Bridgewater, formerly a part of the Titicut site. Excavated during 1946-1951 by the Warren K. Moorehead Chapter of the Society, and reported in Bulletin, Vol.28, #3&4, the previous Titicut excavation had not included the area next to the Seaver Farm that was now selected for our dig. I was joined by Society members, Roland Engstrom and Roy Piver in excavating a 20 foot

wide trench extending westward from a previously excavated crematory and twelve secondary cremation burials at the Seaver Farm site. These were reported, with map and illustrations of the grave goods found, in two former issues of the Society Bulletin, Vols.31, #3&4, and Vol.33, #3&4.

It seemed to me, because of these fabulous grave recoveries that our chance of locating more burials



nearby was good. However, not finding sufficient evidence of occupation, after extending our trench a distance of about 55 feet through almost sterile soil, we decided to look further afield. Test holes were made into a pine grove to our right, which approached a small knoll at the further end. Here, encouraging occupational evidence began to appear, and in May of 1972 we started a thorough excavation of this area.

However, the soil condition was not ideal for stratigraphic recording of recoveries, since the area had been last used as a corn field in about 1900 according to local reports. Confronted with a plow-disturbed upper layer of loam that had a depth of from 6 to about 10", we recorded artifacts only as lying in the loam or in the subsoil. Although the latter was only partly disturbed by the plow, all recoveries from the loam were of course out of place on account of the previous plowing. Consequently, in presenting the recovered artifacts, it has been necessary to treat them typologically, placing them in their respective culture categories to which they have been found to belong at other sites, where stratigraphy could be relied upon. Because of the disturbed soil problem and the fact that we were attempting to dig an area where large trees with massive root systems prevented working with a grid layout, it seemed best to treat the dig more or less as a salvage excavation.

Besides locating two stone hearths at top of the

yellow subsoil near the crest of the knoll, several pits filled with charcoal were uncovered. Three of them extended down to the white sand, but were without recordable artifacts. One contained large charcoal lumps having the appearance of charred pieces of wood, as though from woodwork such as that of dugout-making. Of 76 recognizable recovered artifacts, several specimens appear to belong to the Early Archaic period, while a large majority probably belong to the Late Archaic and Ceramic-Woodland occupations. Illustrations of selected specimens from the loam and subsoil are displayed (Figs. 9,10). Among the recoveries were 4 drills, 30 projectile points, a perforated pendant, 6 scrapers, a quartz graver, one sharpening stone, and a Flake knife of imported flint.

An intriguing recovery (Fig.10,#5) appeared near one of the hearths about 4" down in the yellow subsoil. It may be a Bifurcated point with very deep notches and serrations. On the other hand it may be an Eccentric similar to one found about 150 feet away on the Seaver Farm field in 1969, and reported in Society Bulletin, Vol.34, #1&2. Its tip is missing, which if present as either a point or an animal's snout, might help to solve the mystery.

Of all recovered artifacts, the one that deserves the greatest attention as the main feature of this report was found in May of 1972. What appeared to be one wing of

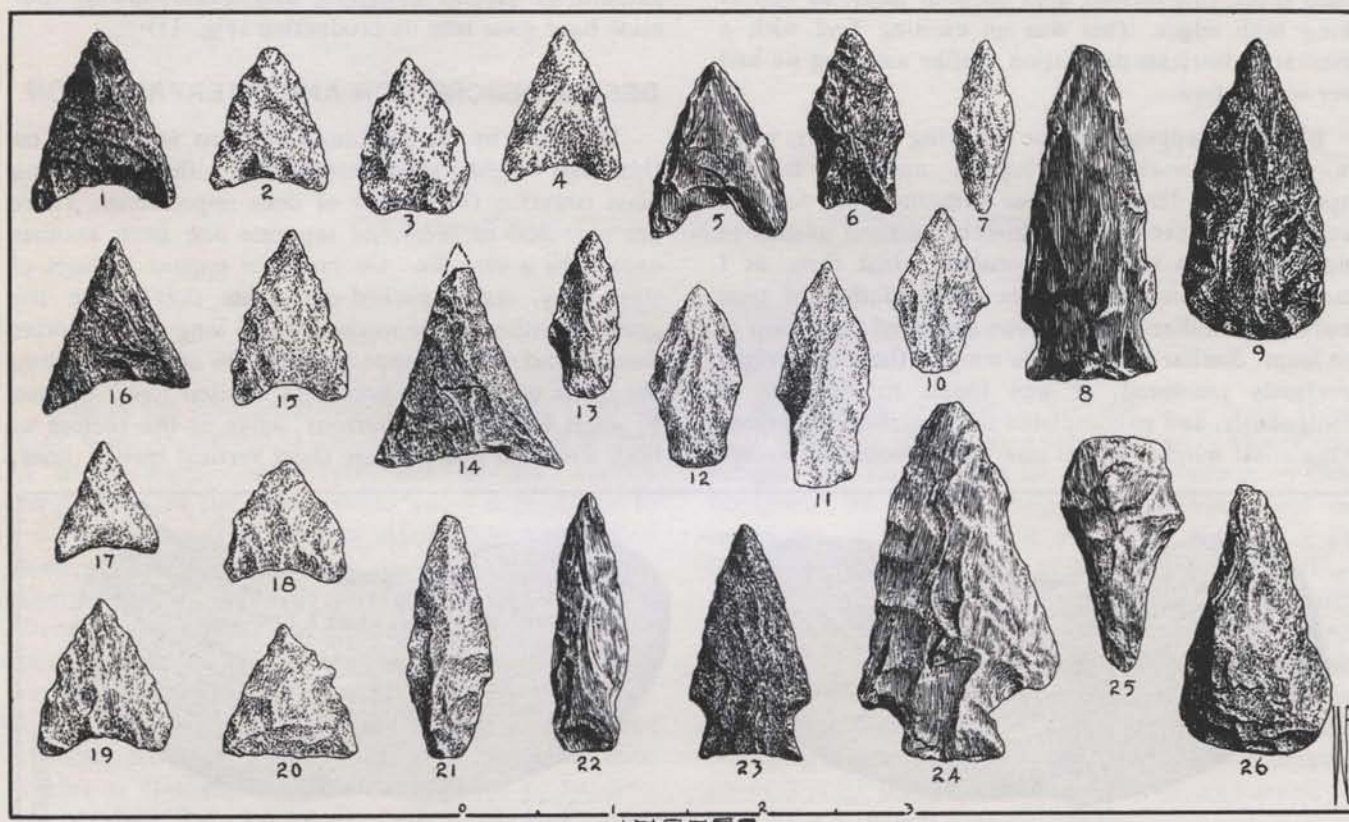


Fig. 9. SELECTED ARTIFACTS, Titicut Excavation from Loam. 1-5,14-20,Small Triangular#4,5; 6,7,10-13,Small Stem; 8,24,Side-notched#5,2; 9,26,Stem Scraper; 21,22,Corner-removed#3; 23,Eared#3; 25,Tapered Stem Drill.



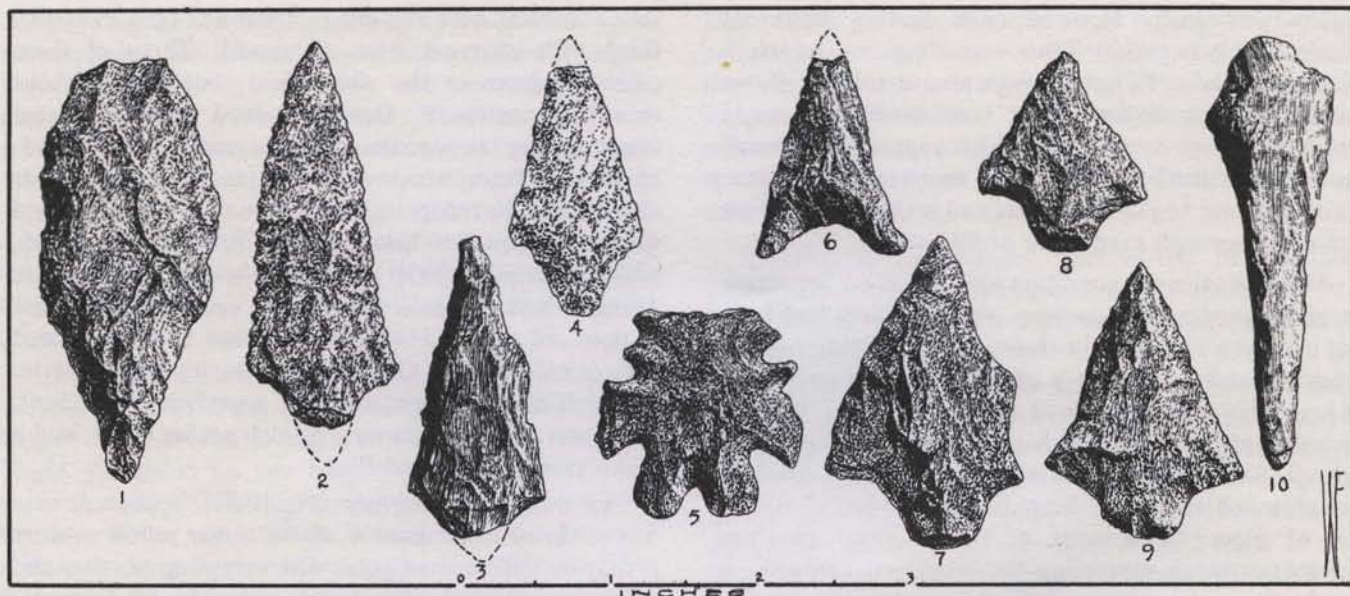


Fig. 10. SELECTED ARTIFACTS, Titicut Excavation from Subsoil. 1, Expanded Drill; 2-4, Corner-removed#8; 5, Bifurcated (Eccentric ?); 6, Eared#2; 7-9, Projectiles (ill-defined); 10, Drill (ill-defined).

a Wing atlatl weight with part of the central drilling preserved was uncovered by Roy Piver at the bottom of the loam, 10" from the ground level. Made of a greenish chlorite, it displayed a mass of hundreds of regimented, tiny pecked-out dents that covered both faces of the wing. These were interspersed at places by many short, fine incised lines on both faces, as well as along both edges. This was an exciting find with a fascinating intricate decoration, unlike anything we had ever seen before.

But what happened on the following Saturday, when we resumed work, was beyond anyone's fondest expectation. A large pine tree prevented the forward progress of our excavation, which caused me to shift to one side of this immovable obstacle. Just then, as I started to remove the surface accumulation of pine needles, a familiar-looking stone appeared at the top of the loam. Similar to the single wing of the atlatl weight previously recovered, it was found to fit onto it contiguously, and so completed this fancifully decorated Wing atlatl weight. It was now wholly complete except

for one small fractured part that was missing; later restored. The additional wing lay about 10 feet distant from the first, and separated from it in depth by about 9", probably as a result of the plow. The meticulous design embellishment of this intriguing artifact has been illustrated in an attempt to reveal the immense amount of careful designing and workmanship that must have gone into its production (Fig. 11).

#### DESIGN DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

Intrigued by the multitude of dents and marks on this atlatl weight I spent several days with a magnifying glass counting the myriad of dent impressions. There are over 950 of them, all separate one from another except for a very few. On one face appear 12 lines of these tiny, stylus pecked-out dents that follow the graceful outline of the wings, while 5 long and 3 shorter lines extend over the opposite face. On one wing among the dents occur 3 fine horizontal incised lines, crossed by short lines and 3 chevrons, while at the bottom of both wings on one side are short vertical incised lines.

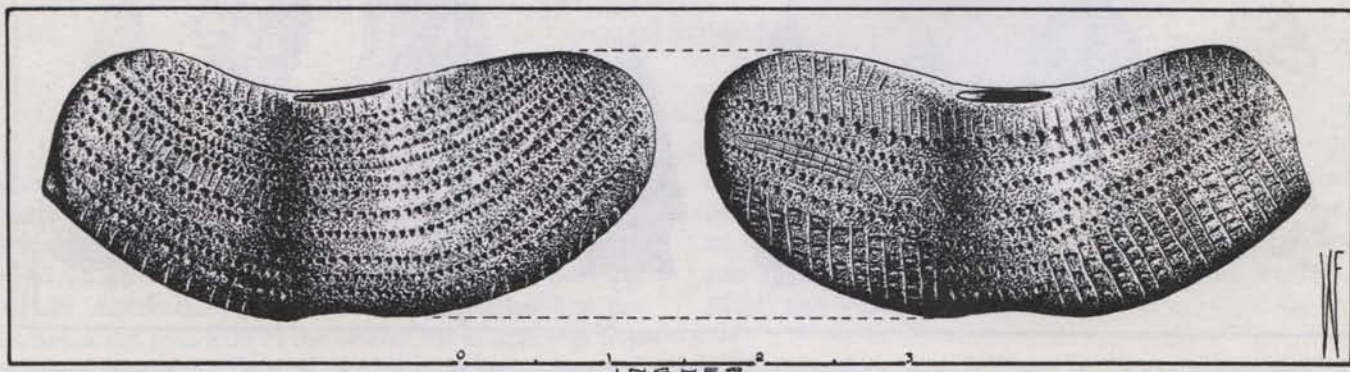


Fig. 11. ENGRAVED ATLATL WEIGHT, Titicut Excavation.



These may be the quills of feathers that are defined by dents made along each of the lines. Along parts of the weight's edges at opposite ends of the wings appear groups of short incised marks. These are more or less evenly spaced and fill completely one edge from tip to tip of the wings. They seem to be a decorative feature of some kind that may have a meaning; presumably are not tally marks because of their evenly spaced symmetrical positioning.

This highly engraved Wing atlatl weight is centrally perforated with an irregularly drilled hole of about 5/8" in diameter. Even though the stone material of the weight is chlorite—a talc softened stone—it is hard enough to have posed a problem for the artisan, who may have used a quartz crystal stylus to engrave the elaborate decoration that covers it. What the engraving is intended to portray, if more than a decorative piece of work, is a provocative question. The Editor has offered one interpretation that seems to be the only sensible one at the moment. It is hoped that other interesting theories may be forthcoming now that an illustration of the atlatl weight has been made for careful study.

The interpretation is based upon a belief that, as

previously mentioned, the 27 short vertical lines along which appear pecked dents, found along the convex edge on one face of the weight, represent feathers. Augmented by the rows upon rows of dents over both faces, they may typify the feathers of the wings. If so, this engraved portrayal might be symbolic of a flying bird such as an eagle, with the intent of introducing a mystical power of flight to speed the ejected spear to its mark.

Over the past 30 years of surface hunting in the Titicut area single fragments from 2 Wing atlatl weights have been found, each with a few superficial scratched markings. Besides this insignificant evidence of a possible decorative effort in marking these weights, no other specimens are known to have appeared with even a semblance of a worked decoration. With such a noticeable absence of engraved weights, the present Titicut specimen becomes more impressive as an exceptional example of aboriginal stone engraving, the interpretation of which is tantalizingly obscure.

North Middleboro  
October 4, 1973



## THE MAKING OF WING ATLATL WEIGHTS

WILLIAM S. FOWLER

One of the first questions that enters the head of most, when an artifact is studied is: How was it made? In many cases, either the size or the various complexities of the object raises one's curiosity as to how the aboriginal artisan ever managed to carve out of stone such fantastic shapes as often occur. Much experimentation over the years has made significant discoveries of certain important methods used in the making of projectile points, especially such complex work as that required in the shaping of the Fluted point. Still other investigations have discovered the probable techniques used in the fashioning of such articles as Grooved axes and other forms of hatchets and clubs. But yet there are numerous other implements with apparent intricacies of development that evoke queries as to how they were constructed.

Recently an exceptional preform of a large Wing atlatl weight in an advanced semifinished condition was brought into the museum for our examination by Guy Mellgren. Its several unfinished features seem so instructive as to the way it was being made that an illustration and description of it seem worthwhile (Fig. 12). This artifact was borrowed by Mellgren from Alfred Linscott of Hingham, Massachusetts, who found it in a plowed field just south of a dune-like esker. Over the years many artifacts have been picked up nearby by Linscott during his pursuit of market gardening in the adjoining fields. The site—M 36 N.W. 30—is located about 3 miles south of Hingham harbor, and seems to have been a favorite camping place.

In examining this Wing atlatl weight preform, one's



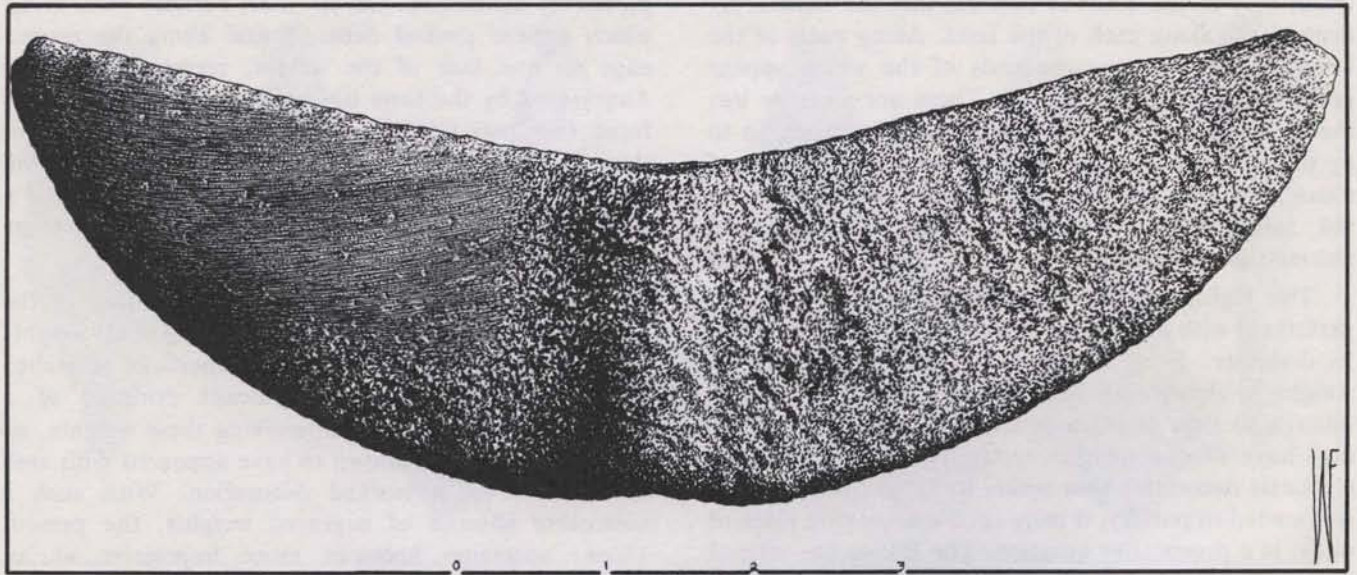


Fig. 12. WING ATLATL WEIGHT PREFORM, Hingham, Massachusetts.

attention is attracted to its perfect condition. It has unusually fine symmetry with perfect balance between its two wings that have a spread of nearly 9". While a centrally drilled hole is absent, a slight pecked dentation atop its central enlarged body locates the spot where drilling was to have taken place. Perhaps the most noticeable departure from the smooth, and often polished wing finishing of completed specimens, is the uniform pecked allover condition of the wings. Further examinations of the wings reveals that part of the face

of one has been rubbed smooth, completely eliminating the pecked surface that formerly existed, as may be noted from the illustration. The stone of which the weight is made is chlorite, a talc-softened stone that outcrops with steatite at many stone bowl quarries. The cutting out of this relatively thin winged form, probably with a stone End pick, represents what seems to have been an incredible accomplishment, when thought is given to the amount of stock that had to be worked away from the original stone block. To have performed

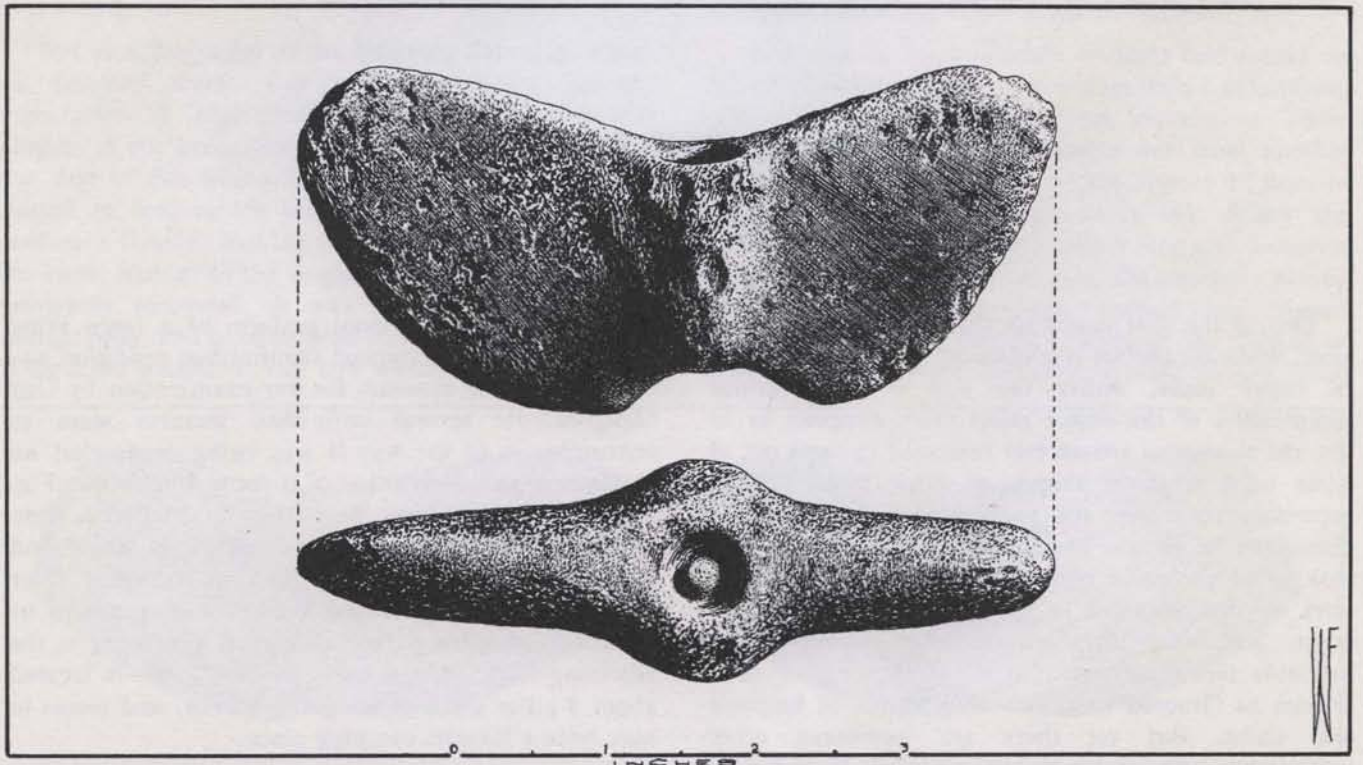


Fig. 13. WING ATLATL WEIGHT PREFORM, Hudson Valley, Opposite Catskill. Side and top views displayed; note central small stone core in top view.



this task without causing a fracture speaks well for the skill of the stone carver.

After noting the Hingham atlatl weight preform's characteristics, it seems important to try to visualize what they may tell us about the methods used in its development. Quite obviously, first the entire carving was performed using an End pick to peck it into shape. This tool most likely would have been made of a hard stone like quartz, to have withstood the extensive wear, as indicated by the great mass of large and small peck marks that cover the wings. Apparently, with the pecking process completed, the work of eliminating the rough surfaces by grinding with a stone abrader had commenced, when this partly completed preform was abandoned for some unknown reason. Doubtless the next operation would have been the drilling of a hole through the enlarged central body, which in this case could have had a 1/2" diameter. Such a perforation conforms to those found in most Wing atlatl weights that vary from 1/2" to 5/8", indicating the size of stick that was used for the atlatl.

At this juncture, it seems worthy to note another Wing atlatl weight preform that had progressed one step further toward its final form. This specimen was recovered as a surface find from a plowed field on the east bank of the Hudson River, opposite the town of Catskill. It was picked up years ago by the late Mrs. Ruth Derby, who donated it to the Society for display in its Bronson Museum. For a better understanding of its informative traits the enclosed illustrations have been prepared (Fig. 13). It is made of a somewhat harder stone than chlorite that appears to be a ferrous impregnated gneiss with the appearance in one area of bands, as a result of its laminated metamorphic formation. Although its wings do not appear to be exactly equal, they seem in fairly good balance. The end of one wing was missing—subsequently restored—and some peck marks are still to be seen, where the surface has not been completely rubbed smooth. It is apparent, as in the case of the Hingham preform, that the first operation had been that of carving out the shape with an End pick, after which the smoothing operation had been only partly completed by grinding.

Up to this point, both preforms exhibit a similar sequence of two processes: pecking and grinding. But the Hudson Valley specimen shows a third operation—that of perforating its central enlarged body between the wings. With an examination of this trait—made possible by the illustrated top view—we are able to review the method of drilling used by the stone carver. It appears probable that when the hole was completed, the final grinding operation would have taken place, in which all peck marks would have been rubbed out.

In the matter of the drilling operation—as shown by the illustration, and as will now be explained—the hole appears to have been perforated by abrasion. For this process a stick of 1/2" or slightly more in diameter was oscillated probably between the hands of the operator, after fine sand had been placed in a hollow spot, pecked out in preparation for the drilling, as shown by the Hingham preform. In the case of the Hudson Valley specimen, drilling with a flat-ended stick had produced a hole about 5/8" deep. But the important feature to note is the small projection in the center of the hole. Here may be seen a central stone core left by the soft pith of the stick that with sand caused less abrasion than that produced by the harder wood around it. This interesting feature—an unfinished perforation—fortunately proves beyond a possible doubt that the method used was stick-drilling with sand by abrasion.

In the many finished atlatl weights examined by the author, numerous drilled twirl marks and other traits—now that a definitive example is provided by the Hudson Valley preform—indicate that the perforation was invariably accomplished with a stick and sand by abrasion. As it now appears, this important process was a final operation, after which finishing touches doubtless were made, such as completing the surface grinding, and then often putting a high finish on the wings of the weight by hand-buffing with some suitable fine abrasive tool.

Compared to the simpler Oval atlatl weight, the more complex form of the Wing type, described in this paper, obviously required much more work and presumable skill in its development. This being the case, it would appear more probable that the latter was a later creation, with time a factor in improving the skill of the artisan. Therefore, in considering which came first—apart from any stratigraphic evidence from excavated sites—it seems more relevant to associate the Oval weight with an earlier, less sophisticated cultural people, and the Wing weight with a higher type of skilled labor in a later period. This then may tend to support incomplete evidence from the field—so far recovered—that the Oval weight came first as a tool of the Early Archaic hunters, and was replaced by the Wing weight of the Late Archaic settlers. One quite obvious observation seems well to keep in mind that the Wing type shows no traits that might be claimed as evolving from the Oval weight, or vice versa. Therefore, in the absence of supporting evidence, the postulation that separates them, each in one of the two Archaic periods without involvement—and therefore without racial continuity—still seems tenable.

Bronson Museum  
December 19, 1973





## CORN MILLS: A MOUNTAINTOP EXAMPLE

WILLIAM S. FOWLER

In a review of mortars and pestles, as used during the Ceramic-Woodland period for the grinding of maize, research often includes a study of large boulders, usually of granite, which have a hollowed-out concavity conspicuously displayed in one face—sometimes consisting of more than one hollow. Willoughby calls them “communal mortars” but they are commonly referred to as Corn Mills, which perhaps is as descriptive a name as any. Good examples have been found in various parts of New England and have been reported at various times over the past century. Some have occurred on known aboriginal camp sites, or in such close association as to suggest their use as large mortars for the grinding of maize by family groups. Willoughby mentions one in Orland, Maine, on the shore of Lake Umbagog; another near an old village site in Concord, Massachusetts; a third in a field in Sandwich on the Cape; and some twenty or more in the valley of the Merrimack and its tributaries. Another Corn Mill has been reported in Canaan, Connecticut, near which a long 20 lb. pestle was found that may have been used in it, now on display in the Bronson Museum.

A few of these boulders, like the one referred to in Orland, Maine, have only a shallow hollow although quite large in diameter, which shows evidence of having been pecked out by man. However, another kind that typifies the example referred to specifically in this paper has a well defined hollow. Originally this was a pothole, formed by meltwater from retreating glaciers, which whirled pebbles around in one spot over probably more than a thousand years. This gradually wore away the boulder to form a relatively deep hole. Such a glacial remain would have caught the eye of primitive planters and in some cases apparently was utilized as a mortar for the communal production of ground maize. This would have occurred hundreds of years after maize had been introduced into New England, at a time when it was being grown in more sizable quantities; a condition that probably existed in contact days. On several occasions the writer has been called into the field to identify boulders with a conspicuous hole or holes appearing in them. Discovery of such remains excites public imagination, which likens them to better-known smaller stone mortars. At one place in Swansea he was taken up a small brook that empties into the Palmer River, and here he was shown two of these boulders with potholes. They were situated in the brook with water running around them. One had at least two holes appearing on a sloping face, the other just one as he recalls. After examining them most carefully, he found them to be potholes that evidently had never been used as corn mortars. All but one of the

holes were small with a 6 to 8” diameter, although relatively deep, while the largest one may have had a 10” diameter. However, their small sizes were less revealing as a criterion than their interior-formed surfaces. These showed a whorled condition, indicating formation from a hard revolving body such as a pebble, which had produced circular ridges and rounded bottoms. These holes showed no signs of having been modified in shape from pestle wear. Therefore, although these pothole-pitted boulders lay next to a well-defined site on the Palmer River, their unfavorable position in the brook, together with no signs of inside pestle shaping would seem to indicate their non-use as Corn Mills.

At another time the writer looked over a long boulder in the East Taunton area. In this case there appeared as many as eight or more relatively small round-bottomed potholes of 4 to 6” in diameter, each having a commodious depth of 3 or 4”. They occurred along a sloping face of the boulder with a few on an opposite oblique face of the rock. In this instance the boulder’s location was favorable, on a dry elevation away from water, entirely surrounded by small tree growth. However, extensive weathering of the inside surfaces of the holes had obliterated circular pothole ridges that once may have been present, while there were no signs of shaping from pestle wear to indicate their use as mortars. The conclusion reached in this case was that these potholes in small sizes, without signs of interior pestle modification, undoubtedly were considered unsuited for mortars with their limited capacities, and were never used. In a situation like this, if subsequent excavation about such a boulder uncovers no broken pestles or other evidence of corn grinding, a belief in its non-use as a Corn Mill would probably be justified.

Perhaps the most spectacular search for and investigation of a presumed Corn Mill in the writer’s experience occurred in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. The object in question was said to have been discovered by early settlers of this mountainous region in the late 1700’s, and was rumored to be a large boulder with a hollowed-out face. As described by the country folk, it was reported to be located high up on a mountain in Peru, near the Middlefield boundary line. This area, at the time the writer was first informed of it, had a dense cover of hardwood and spruce. It was located far removed from present day farms in what was then one of the wildest sections of the Berkshires. After the writer had made a determined search for the boulder without success, years passed by with its existence relegated in thought to the shadowy past.



Years later in about 1926 extensive logging operations extended up the sides of the mountain, which has an elevation of about 1,900 feet. In the end this removal of trees reached a spot on the mountaintop where the much-talked-of boulder was found. And because of its fabled existence up to this time, its rediscovery caused much excitement among some historic-minded people in the village of Becket. Clint Ballou, owner of the basket shop in town, who was conducting the logging operations was one of those, who felt that the boulder should not be allowed to remain on top of the mountain, inaccessible to the public gaze. Subsequently, he made plans to remove it—a most difficult undertaking—by stoneboat and motor to Becket village. But before its journey to the valley took place, the writer climbed the mountain to view it in its original location.

The boulder was of granite, and had a more or less flat horizontal face, one side of which rose abruptly. The level area below this elevated shoulder contained a large pothole with a diameter of 14" at the top and a depth of approximately 8". The inside surface near the top was somewhat pitted from weathering, but became less eroded toward the bottom. It revealed a uniform conoidal shape with a small rounded bottom that differed from the usual full rounded bottoms of most potholes (Fig.14). At the far side at the top, just under

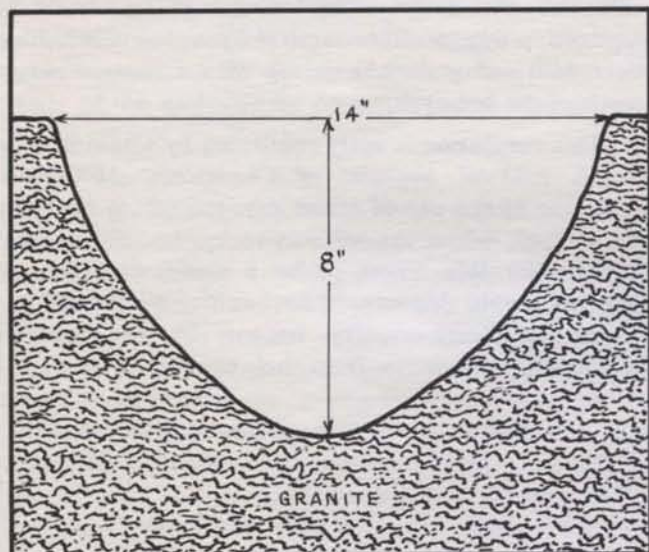


Fig. 14. Hollowed contour outline of the mountain Corn Mill in Peru.

the elevated shoulder, part of a circular ridge could be seen. Its whorled condition was probably all that was left to indicate the hole's origin as a glacial-formed pothole. Subsequently, it may have become modified from pestle wear to form its conoidal shape, to judge from the smoother interior condition toward the bottom. While its eroded interior has obscured actual marks of possible pestle wear, its remarkable

evenly-formed walls, tapering to a small rounded bottom suggest its primitive use as a large stationary mortar. Inquiring into its historic background, legend has it that when it was first seen by pioneer settlers, a pestle was found in it. If this can be believed as more than fantasy, then it would appear that this old communal Corn Mill should have an interesting tale to tell.

As the writer looked over the surrounding terrain, he became impressed with its favorable properties that would have made it a likely location for growing maize. The land stretching away from the boulder had a gentle slope to the south over an area that covered perhaps an acre with a fairly level surface. This was protected from north winds by a convenient rise of land, which doubtless was wooded, as of now, in aboriginal days. The boulder must have been well-known to the first settlers, as the old mountain road ran nearby, marked by a granite slab, indicating the town boundary between Middlefield and Peru. Further, it should be noted that only a few hundred yards over the rise of land to the northwest was found the brush-covered cellar hole of probably the earliest settler on the mountain. Whether or not he may also have used the old Corn Mill as a mortar is a question that has never been raised, so far as the writer is aware. However, since grist mills followed closely on the heels of pioneer settlers, as New England was gradually opened up, it seems unlikely that our mountaineer would have chosen to have used such a primitive and laborious means of reducing his harvested corn to meal, when a grist mill may have been available by ox cart only a few miles distant.



Fig. 15. Mountain Corn Mill in Peru.

Sometime after the writer's inspection on the mountaintop the boulder Corn Mill was successfully worked loose from its rigid foundation, tied securely on a stoneboat, skidded down the mountain, and finally was brought to rest in Clint Ballou's front yard in Becket. Several years later it was removed to a roadside



memorial green in front of the village library, formerly the Congregational Church, where it may be seen today, as shown in the accompanying photo (Fig. 15).

### CONCLUSION

Allowing for the probability that this report's Corn Mill is in fact what the name implies, how should we explain its apparent isolation where originally found on a high mountain, set apart as it would seem, some miles distant from lowland areas, where evidence of aboriginal settlements now exist? While evidence is lacking to support more than a hypothetical guess that the hollowed-out boulder is in fact a communal maize grinding mortar, certain historic facts that appear to have possible bearing upon the subject are worth considering.

It is known that the Mohawks made frequent raids across the Berkshires, and at times groups of these Hudson Valley Indians remained for days among the River Indians of the Connecticut Valley and other New England tribes, from whom they demanded and received tribute. They had access by way of trails over the mountains, one of which is the well-known Mohawk trail that opens into the Deerfield meadows. Another trail, over which captives are known to have been taken to Mohawk villages, runs up Swift River Valley near Westfield, past Blandford and on over the mountains to the Hudson. The corn mill mountain in Peru lies somewhere between these trails, far enough removed to have secreted it from roving bands of the dreaded Mohawks, whose pillaging was greatly feared. These Iroquois enemies were want to use fire to wipe out villages of the New England aborigines, who built palisaded strongholds in several places in which to defend themselves.

This situation is attested by early colonial writers, whose reports were extensively studied in 1851 by De Forest, and recounted by him in his *History of the Connecticut Indians*. Bearing upon this subject he says: "Their [Iroquois] war parties ranged from Hudson's Bay on the north to the mountains of Tennessee on the south; from the Connecticut on the east to the Mississippi on the west; and every Indian nation within

these vast boundaries trembled at the name of the Akonoshioni or United People [Five Nations]. The natives of Connecticut [Connecticut Valley included] did not escape, but were exposed every year to the ravages of these terrible destroyers. Their war parties ... [would] fall suddenly and silently upon the villages along the seashore or in the valley of the Connecticut River . . . A large part of the inhabitants of the country west of the Connecticut became their subjects; and every year two old Mohawks might be seen going from village to village to collect tribute, and haughtily issuing orders from the great council at Onondaga. All the Iroquois were known in New England by the name of the Mohawks, because that tribe, the oldest and most warlike in the Confederacy, lived to the eastward of the others, and was oftenest seen this side of the Hudson."

So here appears a setting, which offers a possible reason for the existence of our mountaintop Corn Mill. Hidden away on the summit of a high mountain in Peru, might this not have been a maize-producing center? This idea seems supported by the favorable terrain, suitable for the cultivation of maize, that lay in front of the communal mortar. Here groups of Indians from various mountain villages from Hinsdale to the Housatonic Valley may have gathered to plant and harvest crops of maize, and grind it into meal on a communal-sharing plan. This then might have served as a secret producing center for maize meal, from which village supplies destroyed by Mohawk pillages could be replaced; a way to assure survival by means of a hidden Corn Mill and grainfield on top of a mountain out of reach of the enemy.

This conclusion is aptly confirmed by Champlain in Vol.2, p.23 of *Voyages of Champlain*, 1603-1610. Speaking of the use of secret mountain corn fields by the Hurons, where the soil was rocky, he relates, what appears for this report to be a significant piece of information, in this way: "[they] cultivate poor soil in a rocky and sandy country, because in the mountain regions they are secure from their enemies."

Bronson Museum  
June 2, 1972





## A POTTERY ANALYSIS

WILLIAM S. FOWLER

*Thanks are due Dr. Zariphes for bringing into the museum two small ceramic pots, one of which required restoring of part of its castellated collar. Both display interesting traits, so well defined that they seem to ask for an interpretation as to their age, culture association, and relationship to pottery of New England.*

The two pots of this report were recovered from a creek in the upper Delaware River Valley purely by accident, as so often is the case. It was over a hundred years ago in 1868, after a spring freshet, that they were exposed to view in the creek. This is presumed to have been Broadhead Creek, Monroe County, Pennsylvania, north of the Delaware Water Gap, some 50 miles from the New York border. Here it is known that many fine artifacts have appeared over the years, of which these pots are no exception. They were found by Richard Davis, while surface hunting along the creek, and have remained in his collection until now. Recently obtained from the collection, they have been made available for an evaluation, which seems apropos in view of the evolutionary study of New England-made pottery reported in this Society's Products Classification, Vol. 27, #3&4. At this point it is important to reveal the local source from which extensive pottery remains were recovered by members of the Narragansett Archaeological Society of Rhode Island that made possible the study of the evolutionary development of ceramic pots in this area of the Northeast.

It was at the Sweet-Meadow Brook site in Apponaug, Rhode Island—a shell deposit—with its excavation completed in 1955 that the first three of four recognized pottery development stages were well defined. They lay one over the other, with the earliest appearing at the bottom of the shell. Such relatively undisturbed stratigraphy has never been reported before or since from any site in the Northeast, east of the Hudson, where like quantities of potsherds have appeared with such far-reaching results. A study of these Rhode Island recoveries revealed advances in the making of pottery that were noticeable through the first three stages of development, with more sophistication appearing in design treatments extending into Stage 3. As a result of this research, we have been able through comparative analysis to determine fairly accurately the development stage to which pots, such as those of this report, probably belong. In this way it seems possible to envision culture relations between an outlying region and New England, or more specifically, to detect a possible movement of ceramic ideas from it into New England, and so discover the probable culture center involved.

A radiocarbon measure at the Rhode Island Pottery site referred to has indicated a probable transition date between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of about A.D. 1000. With this as a base, the various approximate starting dates for the entire four pottery stages have been extrapolated as follows: Stage 1—A.D. 300; Stage 2—A.D. 1000; Stage 3—A.D. 1400; Stage 4—A.D. 1600.

With these thoughts in mind, examination can now be made of this report's two small pots. The intent is to discover what likenesses may be revealed between their ceramic traits, as representing a border area, and those of New England pots. Illustrations of them are shown nearly full size in order to enable a better study of the design work, especially the significant dentate rim-bisecting treatment of pot #1 (Fig. 16). Both pots have an approximate height of 4 1/2" and are semi-globular. They are similarly brownish in color; have a smoothed-over cord-marked paddled outside; an apparent tool-smoothed inside; and medium mineral temper. Beyond these likenesses their traits differ, and will be described separately.

Pot #1, with an oval mouth opening of 3 1/8 x 3 3/4", displays a 3/4" collar with two castellations, undercut by a plain constricted neck. The pot's design work is outstanding; is line-dentate throughout, performed by a fine toothed 1/2" tool. This was repeatedly stamped, as it was moved along as required, to produce a continuous line of dentate tooth markings. In addition, the lower edge of the collar and both upper rim edges, inside and out, are notched with slight cuts spaced about 1/8" apart, while two bands of deeper jabs encircle the body below the neck, spaced 1/2" apart. Design motifs consist of filled-in three line linear chevrons on the collar between a three line verticle linear at each castellation; a three line linear horizontal encircling the body just below one band of jabs; and a two line linear horizontal band about 1/2" below the first, the space between being filled with oblique dentate lines closely spaced. Finally a significant trait of this pot lies in the bisecting of its rim with the same toothed implement, as used for the rest of the dentate decorations. This rim treatment may be clearly seen in the illustration.

Pot #2 (Fig. 16) has a round 4" diameter mouth opening with an everted irregular, down-sloping flat 3/16" rim, undercut by a widely constricted plain neck. Decorations are simple, consisting of incised oblique lines marking the rim, and similar oblique jabs forming a horizontal band encircling the body at the base of the neck.



### DISCUSSION

The two small pots, as described, recoveries from the upper Delaware River Valley, may be considered as representative of that general region, a border area to the southwest of New England. And as such, they appear to exhibit some traits resembling those of vessels made by the potters of New England. This is not to say that pots of both areas are interchangeable, but rather that they have enough similar traits to suggest a probable association of some sort. If so, then it may be possible to discover what kind of contacts existed

between the upper Delaware Valley border region and that, especially of central and southern New England. That is, we might seek to discover the culture relations that may have existed between these two areas, separated as they are by rivers and an expanse of the Sound. For, in our study of New England, a somewhat isolated area of the Northeast extending north of the Sound, it seems essential to learn as much as possible from where the people came who settled here, and from what outside region flowed the culture influences that at times helped mold their thoughts and actions.

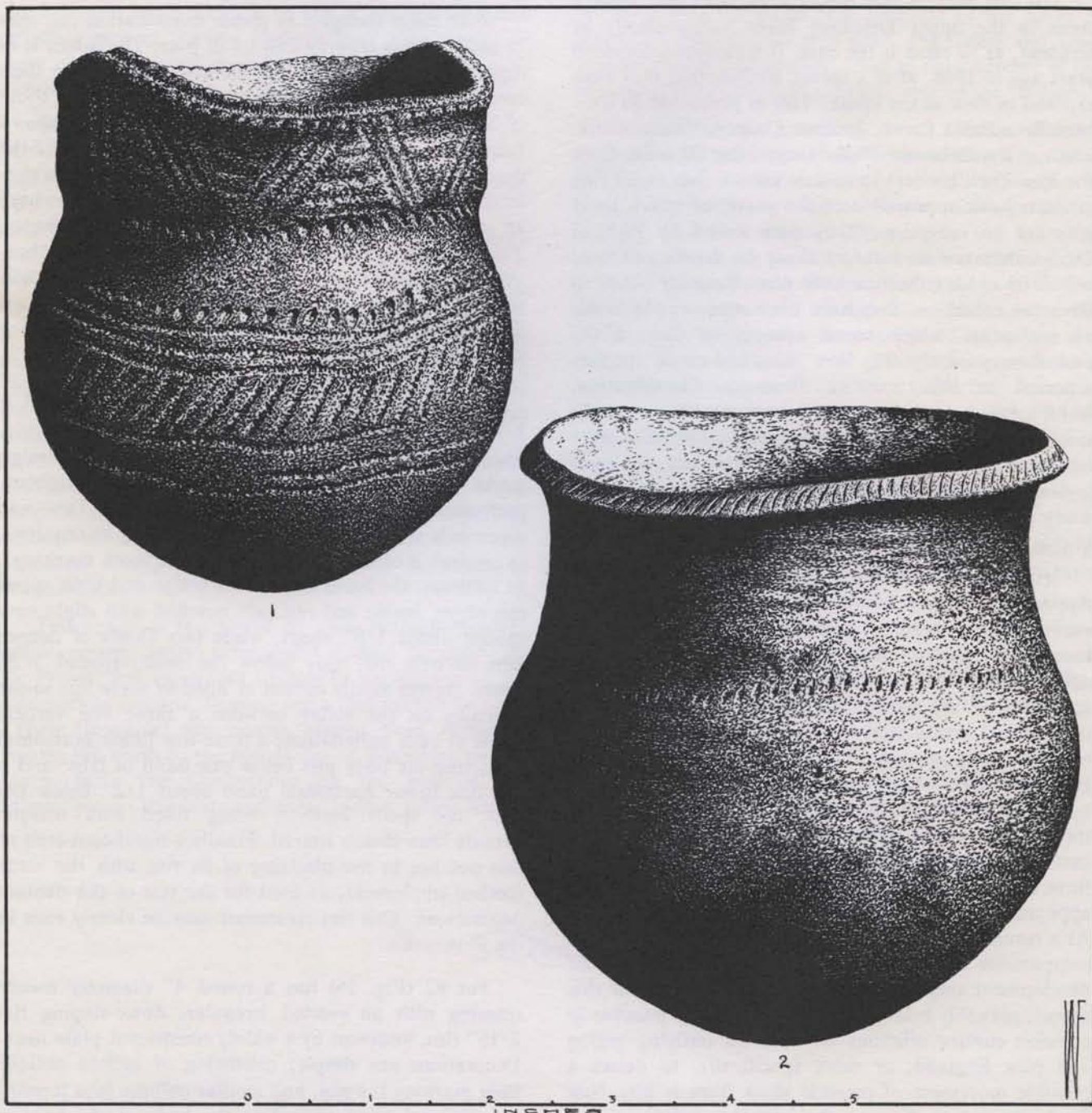


Fig. 16. TWO SMALL CERAMIC POTS. Recovered in 1868 from a creek near the Delaware Water Gap, after a spring freshet.



Classification of the pots should first be made, it would seem, utilizing Ritchie's terms now in use in the area where the two pots were found, which appears to extend into southeastern New York. Both pots seem to have traits that equate with Ritchie's Castle Creek Owasco Aspect, which precedes pottery of the Iroquois. Pot #1, with its profuse dentate embellishments, including the chevron motif and castellated collar, is perhaps the more easily identified as being Owasco. However, pot #2 also has Owasco characteristics, with a similar semi-globular shape. Its widely constricted neck topped by an everted flat rim is diagnostic, and with its incised work may be found among Owasco ware, although pots with these traits are more infrequent than those with dentate treatments. That both vessels belong to the same ceramic period seems obvious, as their recovery together suggests contemporaneity, possibly coming from a burial, since pots of their small size frequently are recovered from graves.

Having established from these observations a pre-Iroquoian position for the two pots in the Owasco category, it is now important to note those of their traits that equate with Stage 3 pottery of New England. Not only semi-globular shapes but constricted necks, and the flat decorated rim of pot #2 with its incised work are reminiscent of Stage 3 ware. More impressive, as found with pottery of this stage, is the line-dentate stamping of pot #1 with the elemental chevron motif. And a most convincing trait of this pot, seen only on some Stage 3 vessels, is the bisecting of the flat rim, invariably made with the same tool used in completing the rest of the design work. However, the castellated collar of this pot is a noticeable departure from Stage 3 traits; does not appear in New England until the next and last development period, Stage 4, consisting of pottery presumed to be Iroquois influenced.

While no interpretation of evidence can ever be considered final or without possible alternatives, what is exposed here seems to the writer to indicate certain important culture contacts that may have influenced pottery development in New England.

When knowledge of pottery-making first arrived in this region of the Northeast, presumably diffused from Asia over the same route as that used by early migrants, it displaced flat-bottomed stone bowls with conoidal shaped ceramic pots, as found in Asia and again in Nebraska, and on east. However, the change from a flat-bottomed vessel of stone bowl times to a pointed-bottom clay pot was resisted by stone bowl societies from Ohio through Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and finally Long Island. Throughout these stone bowl-

using communities ceramic pots were first made—apparently unsuccessfully—with flat bottoms and sometimes with lugs like those of stone bowls. However, recoveries suggest that soon the conoidal shape was accepted as the preferred form, since it would have enabled a more even distribution of heat with less chance of cracking, when placed in the hot coals of the fire—stratified pottery recoveries in these areas support this change-of-shape sequence. Not so, however, in New England. Here at the lowest pottery level Stage 1 pots—the first to appear—have conoidal forms; are not flat bottomed.

What seems to have happened is that when pottery-making instructions were brought across the Sound from Long Island, the experimental stage of the unsuccessful making of flat-bottomed pots had ended. By then New England women apparently were influenced to accept the conoidal shape for their first manufactured pots as being more durable.

An important thing to note is that, whereas New England may have been the creative center that sparked the stone bowl industry, the change to ceramics was as a result of a movement of ideas arriving from the west, after an extended diffusion. From then on potters in this northeastern region most probably were subjected to ceramic influences emerging from time to time from culture centers, located in outside regions to the west, and southwest.

With appearance of the two small pots, representing Castle Creek Owasco pottery of New York, certain of their traits have been recognized as being related to Stage 3 pots of New England. And, since creative influences were flowing into this area from border regions during the ceramic period, the two pots provide evidence to support a belief in the culture center involved. This now seems to have been located in an area composed of the upper Delaware, Hudson, and Mohawk valleys. Perhaps the most outstanding confirming evidence is the dentate-marked bisected rim of pot #1. This distinctive trait appears to have come into New England during ceramic Stage 3 times, as found on pottery of that day, and typifies, as it does with this pot, pre-Iroquoian pottery. However, the pot's castellated collar is not found on Stage 3 vessels. This seems to suggest that this outstanding trait had been created at the center subsequent to that of the bisected rim, but did not find its way into New England until some years later, when it became an important identifying trait of Stage 4 pottery.

Bronson Museum  
July 25, 1972





## EFFIGY CARVINGS

WILLIAM S. FOWLER

The subject of stone effigies as carved by aboriginal artisans is an intriguing one, because determining how they may have been used leaves much to speculation. When they closely resemble animated objects, as produced by skilled workmen, it is possible sometimes to associate them with a related activity, domestic or ceremonial. But when an effigy lacks definition, as to whether it is animal, fish, or bird, then one's curiosity is aroused, inducing deliberation as to the use for which it was created.

Small effigies made from various shaped stones with a groove or drilled hole, for example, were pendants beyond a question of a doubt. Such a trinket is shown in the Society's Products Classification, Vol.27, #3&4, p.50 (Fig.11,#13). Although partially damaged, its likeness to that of an owl is quite obvious. However, when larger effigies occur with nothing to suggest how they were used, one is left to wonder and speculate why man spent the time it must have taken to peck and grind them into shape. And when consideration is given to the infrequent appearance of effigies of any kind either from surface hunting or by excavation, the urgent quest that develops for a reasonable interpretation of some cherished new recovery becomes understandable.

In about 1961 an interesting surface find was made at a large camp site in Tiverton, Rhode Island. The Bartons, father and son, were looking over a site that had been extensively plowed, when Arthur, the son, picked up the effigy-headed object of this report. It is now part of the collection of George Barton, who some time ago brought it to the museum for restoration. The missing part seemed unimportant at the time, as it consisted only of about 2" at one end. However, when more thought was given to an interpretation of the recovery, a discussion of how it was used seemed to suggest that its stem may have performed an important function. For this reason, it occurred to the writer that here was an unusual implement that should be discussed as to its possible use, and in this way brought to the attention of our readers.

But first it is well to know something about the Tiverton site where this effigy-headed tool was picked up. Over the years quantities of artifacts of the several cultures, except the Paleo, have been found there due to deep machine plowing of the area. They include: Classic and Clumsy plummets; Grooved and Plain gouges; Celts; Wing atlatl weights; Grooved weights; Pitted stones; Pestles; Sinewstones; quantities of white quartz scrapers of all kinds; and finally, various types of projectile points, mostly of the Late Archaic and

Ceramic-Woodland cultures. However, it seems significant that of all the recovered projectiles, Large Triangular and Small Triangular#5 points, known to be diagnostic of the latter culture, occurred more frequently. Add to this the site's numerous Sinewstones, tools that also have been closely associated with this culture at excavated sites—suggestive of the increased use of the bow-and-arrow—and a Ceramic-Woodland occupation seems more in evidence than that of earlier cultures. The site is on elevated ground overlooking an extensive Tiverton inlet from the sea, and to judge from the thousands of artifacts taken from it during the last century, appears to have been a popular camping place, especially during the last culture period, as just observed.

### THE TIVERTON RECOVERY

This stone effigy, carved by early man, consists of a pecked, thick straight stem, with somewhat rounded edges, about 1 1/4" in diameter. It has an enlarged upper end that bends off at an angle. This top has been pecked into an effigy head with well-defined mouth and nose grooves, and an enlarged eye socket appropriately located. These facial markings occur on both sides of the enlarged end to form what looks like the head of a reptile (Fig. 17). At least it is difficult to see in it the likeness of a bird, fish, or animal. After arriving at this conclusion, it was compared to illustrations of reptiles in a book on that subject. While it did not appear to resemble snakes, it did have somewhat the characteristics of large lizards.

But having said this, to go further and try to imagine what purpose the artifact had, poses a more difficult assignment. However, while the end of the stem is missing, it may have terminated in somewhat of a stubby point, suggested by the taper of the stem, as shown by the dotted lines. Assuming that the illustration with the suggested restoration may represent the probable implement as it originally existed, the question is: What possible use could it have had?

Two important divisions of aboriginal living—ceremonial and domestic—suggest themselves as having activities in which this effigy-headed tool might have served a useful purpose. The one that may occur to most is the first mentioned, involving ceremonial rites. These could have been of several kinds, but the most conspicuous, from the standpoint of being associated with deposits available for archaeological interpretation, are those which had to do with burials of the dead. Whether as deposits in secondary cremated burials of the Late Archaic, or in osseous interments of the



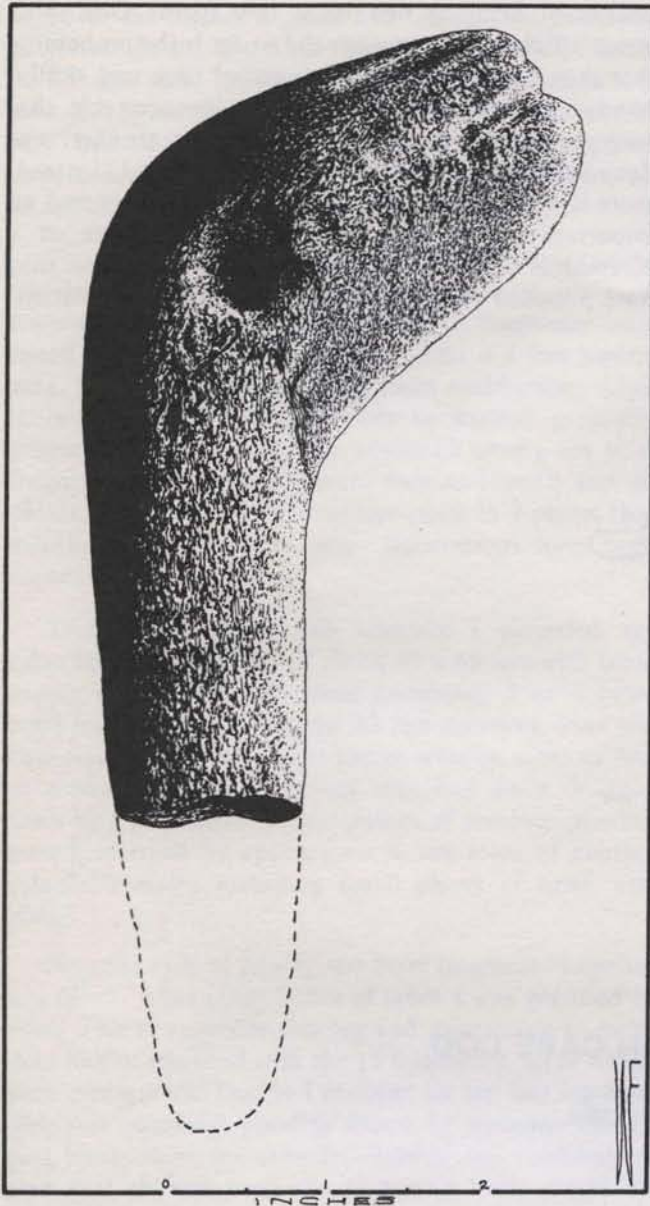


Fig. 17. EFFIGY HEADED TOOL, from a Tiverton Site.

Ceramic-Woodland Age, the finding of an effigy among grave furnishings is possible although of rare occurrence. The writer knows of only one recovery from a burial. It was a small effigy that appeared in a secondary cremation burial on the Cape, and is described in the report, *Magic Stones and Shamans*, appearing in a later issue of the Bulletin. Interestingly, it too seems to be some kind of a reptile, only small in size, possibly a salamander. This is a mythical creature having the power to endure fire without harm, which seems to make it an appropriate adjunct to a cremation. Whatever living thing was intended, its function in the burial may have been to exert some kind of magic, since a Magic stone was found along with it in the same burial. In this case the effigy involved is a small, relatively long, shiny pebble, with no surface marks

other than an incised mouth and two eye sockets. Evidently, in this instance the carved stone represented the entire body of some kind of a creeping creature, which apparently was thought to have magical power, possibly sufficient to ward off the evil spirit that was greatly feared.

But does this kind of an effigy seem to fit the case specimen from Tiverton? Or to put it another way, did the sculptor of the Tiverton effigy intend it to represent a whole creature, as in the case of the Cape salamander effigy, or merely the head of an implement? If the missing section amounted to no more than the end of a tapering straight stem, as shown by the illustration, the answer would seem to support the latter supposition. With this a probability, what kind of a tool could it have been?

Consider first the fact that at the Tiverton site there was preponderant evidence of the last culture period, the Ceramic-Woodland, during which the planting of maize was an important activity. Contributing evidence is to be found in the many pestles recovered from the site. While there is no report to indicate that any of them had effigy heads, such fanciful pestles have been recovered and are on display at the Bronson Museum. However, to assume that the Tiverton effigy is this kind of a pestle appears improbable because of its tapering short 4" stem. This would have served better, it would seem, as a dibble with which to punch holes in something soft like the soil. With this as a premise, it might be argued that it is an effigy-headed Corn-planter, which would have served this purpose well as a hand operated tool. If so, it is the first one of these tools with an effigy head the writer has seen among the many specimens he has examined. Furthermore, since women were the planters and doubtless quickly fashioned their Corn-planners as needed from fragmented stones of nearly the right shape, it is unlikely that a carefully formed effigy head would have been worked by a qualified sculptor on any such ordinary planting tool.

There was, however, a function in the growing of maize that is not so well-known as that of the actual work involved. Reference is made to the planting ceremony that is believed to have taken place. It is probable that a spiritual leader would have conducted ceremonial rites in order to receive sanction from the great spirit of harvests—such proceedings are to be seen today among various western Indian tribes. The shaman doubtless would have been the ceremonial leader, since he was the people's recognized contact with the spiritual world. What such rituals might have been can only be imagined, but it seems reasonable to assume that the yields may have been the general objective. With this in mind, might not the Tiverton effigy have represented a creature thought to have supernatural powers that when



pushed into the soil would emit the desired stimulus to produce a successful harvest.

This, more than any other conceived use of this impressive artifact, may represent the way it was utilized. As a magic tool of the shaman it could have been used in some fashion, accompanied by dance and spoken rituals, perhaps, to give hope of success to those who had performed the planting.

In attempting interpretations of this kind it is well to remind ourselves that any resulting conception can be nothing more than a calculated guess. And yet it may prove valuable to excite further discussion, with a

chance of bringing new ideas into focus. One thing about effigies that impresses the writer is the probability that their carving must have required time and skillful handwork. And as such, it seems inconceivable that such carving, whether by pick, stylus, or abrader, was done just for the pleasure of accomplishment. Instead, there is every reason to believe that each effigy had an important use in the order of things, either of a ceremonial or domestic nature, of which the former may have provided the greater inspiration for their creation.

Bronson Museum  
April 15, 1973



## STONE BOWLS ON CAPE COD

L. RICHARD FULCHER

It is a rare occurrence to learn of a stone bowl recovery on the Cape. This is understandable since no steatite quarries exist there, and all specimens of bowls on the Cape must originate miles removed at quarries in Rhode Island, Connecticut, or inland Massachusetts. Recently I was advised that a medium sized shallow bowl is on display in the Society's Bronson Museum, found years ago in 1946 by Truro boys on High Head, or Pilgrim Heights in Truro. It was recovered from a blackened sand pit, together with 10 felsite chipped blanks, a pitted Paint cup, a limonite pebble, and a small schistose pestle with ends that fitted the concavity of the Paint cup. It was thought at the time that the last three items may have been a paint-making set. As for the bowl, it measures about 6" wide by 9" long, and is shallow, with one lug end in tact. The opposite lug end was missing, but has since been restored. The bowl's walls are finished smooth inside and out, while the

bottom of the vessel retains a soot-blackened coating, suggesting use over the fire as a cooking vessel. A drilled hole at one broken edge indicates that the bowl had been previously cracked and repaired by binding.

Until this information was brought to my attention, I had never heard of a stone bowl being recovered from any Cape site. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when in May of 1972, my excavations in Chatham Port suddenly began to turn up fragments of a stone bowl of steatite. I had located a likely area in a hollow, some 200 feet from a bluff overlooking Crows Pond. Scattered shell debris were all about, showing extensive disturbance from previous relic diggers. These shell-strewn remains covered an area of about 2 acres. Not being dismayed by this evidence of former excavating, and after looking over the site, I dug test holes at a spot that showed no signs of previous digging. It appeared to be at the edge



of where the former digging had left off. At first, one projectile point, and then another showed up, some perfect and some broken. And then still more came into view, all appearing quite close together, which seemed very unusual. Suddenly, a steatite bowl fragment appeared, the first of 15 pieces finally recovered, all found to be from the same stone bowl.

From then on, great care was taken to examine closely each piece of stone to make sure no bowl fragment was missed. Most of the 15 fragments were found lying close together within about a 4 foot square area, buried deep in the black loam overburden. Also, there appeared about 13 whole or broken projectile points within this same area, scattered among the bowl fragments. There were several Side-notched#3 and #6 points, and one Large Triangular point in 2 pieces that measured 2" across its base. Illustrations have been made of a few (Fig. 18).

During the spring and summer I extended my excavation over an area of about 40 x 65 feet with some degree of success. Here were uncovered 3 or 4 more bowl fragments, lying 20 to 30 feet removed from the first recoveries. These later pieces were in more or less of a straight line, as though they had been dragged there by a plowshare. My suspicions of previous plowing were confirmed by appearance in the loam of contact colonial remains including small pieces of brick and glass.

Now the task of joining the bowl fragments together was faced. After many hours of labor I was gratified in being able to assemble one lug end amounting to more than half of the bowl with the 15 fragments, all of which were contiguous. That is I restored all but one lug end. This was missing, possibly found by someone else in past years, since my extended digging has intruded an area that showed evidence of having been previously dug.

So that a better idea of how the bowl looks in its partially restored condition, a photo has been made of it revealing the lug at the restored end—the other end that does not show, presumably had another lug, as found on most bowls (Fig. 19). Describing the restored section further, it may be helpful to know that its interior measures about 3 3/4" in depth, 4" in width, and 5" in length. Its walls measure from 1/2 to 3/4" in thickness, and show perceptible smoothing outside and inside the rim, with the rest of the interior partially smoothed. This work evidently was to prepare the bowl for some useful purpose.

### CONCLUSION

While this evidence is sparse for a comprehensive analysis, still there seems enough to suggest several possibilities. An indication as to the age of the bowl

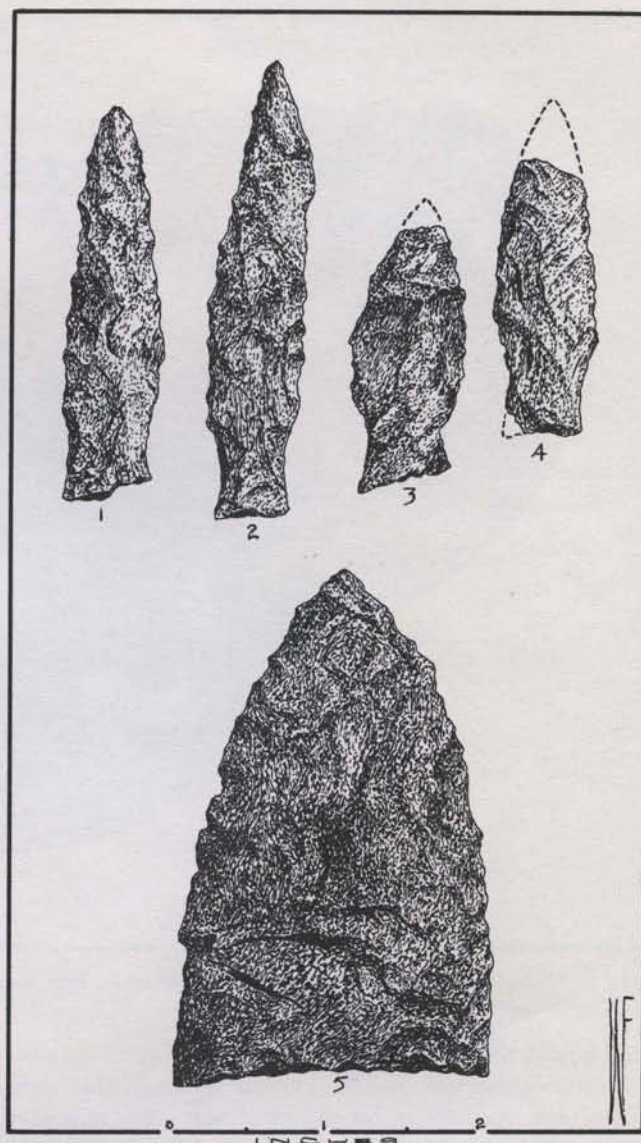


Fig. 18. PROJECTILE POINTS, Chatham Port, Cape Cod (found with stone bowl remains). 1,2,Side-notched#3; 3,4,Side-notched#6; 5, Large Triangular.

may be had by the closely associated projectile points. Especially the Side-notched#6 points, similar to those found at several sites reported from time to time in the Society Bulletin, have appeared to be transitional between the Late Archaic and Ceramic-Woodland periods. And, as for the Large Triangular and Side-notched#3 points, evidence noted at the Sweet-Meadow Brook site in Rhode Island places them soon after the start of the latter period. From this it would seem that the bowl may represent an heirloom carried over from the end of stone bowl-making at the close of the Late Archaic. By then ceramic pots would have replaced stone bowls as cooking vessels, relegating the latter for other uses.

This reasoning appears to suggest my belief that the site bowl was being used at the time of its deposit in the





Fig. 19. STONE BOWL RECOVERY, Chatham Port, Cape Cod. Lug end of assembled bowl fragments, about full size.

pit, not as a cooking vessel but as a storage container for the projectile points, found among the bowl fragments. And since, for the most part, they appeared within a restricted area, it seems probable that when the plow passed over the spot at the time when the area was cultivated—cellar hole remains of an old house was in evidence nearby—the plowshare hit and demolished the bowl.

Recovery of the Chatham Port bowl and associated projectile points has been a gratifying experience, not

only because a partial restoration of the bowl was possible, but because of the way its remains appeared in the ground. To have been able to furnish a possible interpretation of the evidence as to the bowl's age and how it may have been used, although meager in extent, together with its publication in the Society Bulletin for whatever contribution to the archaeology of New England may result, has given me much satisfaction.

Chatham, Mass.

January 1973

